

Thursday, 22 February 2024

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
SUB-BOARD**

A meeting of **Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board**
will be held on

Monday, 19 February 2024

commencing at **9.30 am**

The meeting will be held in The Banking Hall, Castle Circus entrance on the left
corner of the Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay, TQ1 3DR

Members of the Board

Councillor Law (Chairwoman)

Councillor Fellows
Councillor Nicolaou

Councillor Tolchard
Councillor Twelves (Vice-Chair)

Co-opted Members of the Board

Laura Colman, Primary Parent Governor Representative

Vacancy - Secondary Parent Governor Representative

Vacancy - Roman Catholic Diocese Representative

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CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB-BOARD AGENDA

1. **Apologies**
To receive apologies for absence, including notifications of any changes to the membership of the Board.
2. **Minutes** (Pages 4 - 11)
To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board held on 7 and 18 December 2023.
3. **Declarations of Interest**
 - a) To receive declarations of non pecuniary interests in respect of items on this agenda

For reference: Having declared their non pecuniary interest members may remain in the meeting and speak and, vote on the matter in question. A completed disclosure of interests form should be returned to the Clerk before the conclusion of the meeting.
 - b) To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of items on this agenda

For reference: Where a Member has a disclosable pecuniary interest he/she must leave the meeting during consideration of the item. However, the Member may remain in the meeting to make representations, answer questions or give evidence if the public have a right to do so, but having done so the Member must then immediately leave the meeting, may not vote and must not improperly seek to influence the outcome of the matter. A completed disclosure of interests form should be returned to the Clerk before the conclusion of the meeting.

(Please Note: If Members and Officers wish to seek advice on any potential interests they may have, they should contact Governance Support or Legal Services prior to the meeting.)
4. **Urgent Items**
To consider any other items that the Chairman decides are urgent.
5. **Virtual School Annual Report 2022/2023** (Pages 12 - 97)
To receive the annual report from the Virtual School which includes an update on attainment of our cared for and care experienced young people.
6. **School Mental Health Programme** (Pages 98 - 102)
To review the school mental health programme and post Covid trends in schools.

- 7. Family Hub Sustainability and Holiday Activity and Food Programme** (Pages 103 - 124)
1. To review the long term sustainability of the three Family Hubs in Torbay and the early help services they provide including the role of The learning Academy.
 2. To receive an update on the take up of Free School Meals and the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme.
- (Note: this item has been included on the agenda as the meeting of the Children and Young People's Board on 18 December 2023 was not quorate when this item was discussed and in accordance with Standing Order B3 stood referred to the next meeting. There was an informal briefing on this item at the meeting and therefore the report is before the Sub-Board for Members to formally note only.)
- 8. Progress Report on the Implementation of the Children's Service Continuous Improvement Plan 2022/25** (Pages 125 - 199)
- To receive an update on the Children's Services Continuous Improvement Plan 2022/25.
- (Note: this item has been included on the agenda as the meeting of the Children and Young People's Board on 18 December 2023 was not quorate when this item was discussed and in accordance with Standing Order B3 stood referred to the next meeting. There was an informal briefing on this item at the meeting and therefore the report is before the Sub-Board for Members to formally note only.)
- 9. Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board Action Tracker** (Pages 200 - 204)
- To receive an update on the implementation of the actions of the Sub-Board and consider any further actions required (as set out in the submitted action tracker).
- (Note: this includes matters published on the agenda for 18 December 2024 which were not discussed as the meeting was not quorate for this item – they have been updated for the report to this meeting.)
- 10. Exclusion of press and public**
- To consider passing a resolution to exclude the press and public from the meeting prior to consideration of the following item on the agenda on the grounds that exempt information (as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)) is likely to be disclosed.
- 11. Children's Services Self-Assessment** (Pages 205 - 295)
- To review the draft exempt Children's Services Self-Assessment which provides an annual position on performance of Children's Services.

Minutes of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board

18 December 2023

-: Present :-

Councillor Law (Chairwoman)

Councillors Fellows and Nicolaou

Non-voting Co-opted Members

Adrian Woon, Devon and Cornwall Police

Mike Cook, Voluntary and Community Sector and Alternative Provider (Education)

(Also in attendance: Councillors Bye)

18. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Twelves and Hayley Costar (who was represented by Adrian Woon).

19. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Board held on 23 October 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairwoman.

20. Youth Justice Service

The Youth Justice Service Manager, Jon Ralph, outlined the submitted report on the progress made in implementing the Youth Justice Service Improvement Plan and responded to the following questions:

- what percentage of young people using the Service were in education or employment;
- how did attendance compare to the national picture;
- what was happening with prevention work and youth activities;
- how did the community sector feed into prevention;
- did the audit of offending rates demonstrate that reoffending rates had reduced;
- how long has the CAMHS worker been in post;
- was the regular access to forensic CAMHS temporary and how did this link to the support from the psychologist;
- what have partners done to help bring forward suitable accommodation to deliver Youth Justice Services in Torbay;
- what was the current situation with the Upton Pavilion; and

- were the numbers of people coming into the Service going up and what was the reason for this.

Members acknowledged that the Youth Justice Service now had in place a full time Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) Officer which would enable young people requiring support to be referred to them.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board notes the contents of the submitted report;
2. that the Director of Children's Services be requested to work with the Head of the Youth Justice Service to see how they can work more closely with other partner services, the community and voluntary sector at an earlier stage to help young people integrate into community services and help the Youth Justice Service to balance their capacity to deliver preventative and statutory services to reduce youth offending; and
3. that the Director of Children's Services be requested to write out to the statutory partners for youth justice to see if there is any suitable accommodation for youth justice work in Torquay, Paignton and Brixham.

21. Exclusions and Absence

The Head of Vulnerable Pupils, Dan Hamer, outlined the submitted report which provided an update on exclusions and absence and responded to the following questions:

- the secondary schools had high numbers of exclusions and suspensions, what was being done to support the schools to reduce these numbers;
- how were children who were on part time timetables or educated other than at school reflected in the statistics;
- support and training was being provided to school governors, was similar training offered to Councillors who were also governors so that they can understand the issues and what the schools should be doing to reduce numbers of exclusions and suspensions;
- had anything changed at Brixham College to impact on their increase in exclusions;
- do Police colleagues share data on exclusions and suspensions and was there a link with antisocial behaviour and referrals to the Youth Justice Service;
- some schools were taking a trauma informed and restorative practice approach was this being rolled out across all schools;
- does the Council know what extent the new duties had impacted on schools being downgraded by Ofsted; and
- isolation rooms were being used in schools rather than suspensions or exclusions what was being done to monitor the impact of this.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board notes the recommendations to the Children's Continuous Improvement Board as follows:
 - i. Recognises the challenges in the local area and the ongoing work.
 - ii. Promotes school inclusion across all council activity to secure better outcomes for children, families and the community.
 - iii. Has a regard to children and young people's sense of belonging when making decisions.
2. that a training session be provided to Councillors who are school governors or who wish to be school governors on exclusions and suspensions and their roles and what the schools should be doing.

(Note: after consideration of the item in Minute 21, Councillor Fellows left the meeting which resulted in the meeting not being quorate in accordance with Standing Order B3. In accordance with Standing Order B3.2 the remaining items would be included on the agenda for the next meeting for Members of the Sub-Board to formally note their content.)

Chairwoman

Minutes of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board

7 December 2023

-: Present :-

Councillor Law (Chairwoman)

Councillors Fellows, Nicolaou, Tolchard and Twelves (Vice-Chair)

Non-Voting Co-opted Members

Tanny Stobbart, Play Torbay

Hayley Costar, Devon and Cornwall Police

Mike Cook, Voluntary and Community Sector and Alternative Provider (Education)

(Also in attendance: Councillors Bye, David Thomas and Jacqueline Thomas (virtually))

16. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Laura Colman (Co-opted Member) and Saskia Hogbin (Roman Catholic Diocesan Representative – Co-opted Member) who advised that she was not able to take up her post.

It was reported that, in accordance with the wishes of the Conservative Group, the membership of the Sub-Board had been amended to include Councillor Tolchard in place of the Conservative Group vacancy.

17. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Emotional Wellbeing Support Spotlight Review

The Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board undertook a spotlight review on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Emotional Wellbeing Support and examined the submitted supporting evidence (full details of which can be found at

<https://www.torbay.gov.uk/DemocraticServices/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1862&MId=25737&Ver=4.>)

- Torbay Local Area Partnership Presentation
- One Devon Presentation (revised presentation)
- Summary of Children and Young People Emotional Health and Wellbeing Needs
- Provision for Children and Young People in Torbay
- Public Questions

- Healthwatch Report and Questions Experiences of Children and Young People Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Case Studies

The Sub-Board heard evidence from the following:

- Liz Davenport, Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust;
- Phillip Mantay, Devon Partnership NHS Trust;
- Dr Hannah Gooding, Principal Clinical Psychologist, Child and Family Health Devon;
- Beverley Mack, Child and Family Health Devon;
- Femi Akerele, Clinical Director CAMHS;
- Julia Chisnell, Public Health;
- Nancy Meehan, Torbay Council;
- Su Smart, NHS Devon;
- Nigel Acheson, NHS Devon;
- Stuart Heron, School Representative;
- Kevin Dixon, Healthwatch Torbay;
- Carrie, young person; and
- Anonymous, young person.

Partners outlined how they were working together building on existing partnerships with education, health and care for the management and delivery of services to support children and young people with their mental health and that this was a priority area for improvement. This also linked to the approach of the Family Hubs based in Torquay, Paignton and Brixham which was bringing services together in the community to support young people and their families and carers.

Members noted the national statistics showed that mental health needs had increased by 25% since the pandemic with 70% increase in the number of people presenting to health professionals. In Torbay for 7-16 year olds, prevalence had increased from 12% in 2017 to 18% in 2022 and for adolescents aged 17-19 years old, prevalence had increased from 10% in 2017 to 26% in 2022. Child and Family Health Devon provide integrated mental health services for Torbay as well as the wider Devon area (excluding Plymouth). They provide assessment and treatment, support other care professionals and social workers as part of a larger network with 0-19 Universal Services (Family Hubs) and Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust, One Devon, Young Devon and Kooth which helps to promote the importance of good mental health and ensure children's mental health was everyone's business.

The Sub-Board heard the impact of the long waiting times to access services and how young people and their families were being communicated with throughout the process, e.g. asking if they still needed to access services when they had been waiting a long time and how this had also impacted negatively on the young people and their families and added to their mental health pressures and anxiety. They noted that the average number of weeks to wait for a routine referral was 17 weeks, with emergency referrals being seen the same working day with a target of 7 days for those who needed to be seen quicker but not the same day. There was a dedicated service for cared for children and young people with a routine referral taking 14

weeks. Support was moving to a more holistic approach to consider the wider impact on the whole family as well as the young person with responsibility for support sitting across a number of services. CAMHS may work with the school and look at the wider environment around the child to be sensitive of their needs, as well as working with the parents and other family members.

Members noted that where a young person did not meet the threshold for formal CAMHS they were provided with a list of signposted information and self-help such as Kooth, numbers to call if circumstances changed, crisis and intervention lines. CAMHS may also go back to the person who referred the young person for more information to discuss the best options for them. It was noted that there had been some issues with the crisis line not being picked up and it was explained that this was due to a change in operation with assurance given that this was being addressed.

Members heard that young people felt that CAMHS had a stigma in schools and that the services were 'a joke' and that more needed to be done within the schools to change this culture and ensure that young people could go to school staff and be supported and referred appropriately for their mental and emotional health needs.

Members were advised about the Thrive Framework for Mental Health which showed that 30% of people may get better themselves, which was why during the wait for assessment and treatment young people and their families were written to and asked if they still need support. It was acknowledged that the wording and tone of such communication was not being received well and that this could be improved to make it more sensitive to the family.

It was noted that only a small proportion of young people with ongoing specialist mental health care require services post 18 but that the locality teams look at the young person when they were 17 ½ years old to discuss their ongoing needs which include mental health services, education, offer from the voluntary sector, talking therapies etc. to enable the support to be put in place before they reach 18.

Members heard about the importance of early intervention, diagnosis and treatment and supported the need to gather local evidence and data to be used together with co-design of services with young people, parents and carers to ensure that future services meet the needs of our young people and their families to support their mental and emotional health and wellbeing and enable them to meet their full potential.

The Sub-Board thanked the members of the public who had written in questions for consideration as part of the spotlight review which informed the discussions at the meeting. However, a number of issues related to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP), whilst acknowledging that there were concerns around these two areas, this was not covered by the spotlight review as not all people with mental and emotional health needs have SEND or an EHCP.

Members thanked partners for participating in the spotlight review and acknowledged the commitment from the partners to work together to make improvements to communication, signposting and access to services to support children and young

people with their mental and emotional health and wellbeing, as well as the importance of early help and intervention which could reduce the need for formal Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board acknowledges that it is a multi-agency partnership responsibility to ensure that we meet the needs of our children and young people requiring support for their emotional and mental health needs;
2. that the Chief Nurse, Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Head of Service, Child Family Health Devon (CFHD) be requested to provide assurance that all relevant steps are being taken to reduce waiting times for assessment and treatment through Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) where these are the right services to meet the needs of our children and young people and where CAMHS does not best meet their needs they will introduce them to a service that will meet their needs;
3. that the Chief Nurse, Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Head of Service, Child Family Health Devon (CFHD) be requested to provide evidence of how children and young people and their families and carers have been engaged in co-designing the services and support available to them and what action has been taken to determine if the current services are still fit for purpose taking into account the impact of Covid-19, cost of living crisis and climate change, ensuring that services offer flexibility to meet the individual needs of the user;
4. that the Chief Nurse, Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Head of Service, Child Family Health Devon (CFHD) be requested to provide information and signposting on support that is available immediately to vulnerable children and young people and their families and the different pathways to access this support, such information to be widely shared across various platforms to ensure that the message reaches as far as possible to empower people to seek and access support at an early stage, which may lead to a reduction in the need to access formal CAMHS;
5. that the Chief Nurse, Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Head of Service, Child Family Health Devon (CFHD), Deputy Director of Commissioning – Out of Hospital, NHS Devon and Director of Children's Services be requested to review the language used in communications regarding emotional and mental health to use a 'Plain English' approach and to consider how the information will be received from those concerned who may be experiencing extreme anxiety and where appropriate include signposting to alternative provision;
6. that the Chief Nurse, Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Head of Service, Child Family Health Devon (CFHD), Deputy Director of Commissioning – Out of Hospital, NHS Devon and Director of Children's Services be requested to explore other options for alternative provision to traditional CAMHS such as

offer from the community and voluntary sector or the scheme run by Cornwall Council);

7. that to help address the inequalities that emerge in the early years, the Director of Children's Services be requested to work with our partners to develop a dedicated mental health offer for families around early years which draws on support offered through parenting programmes health visiting, perinatal mental health services, and Family Hubs;
8. that the Director of Children's Services be requested to work with the Chief Nurse, Integrated Care Board (ICB) and schools to develop a more co-ordinated approach to care for children and young people who need mental health support;
9. that the Director of Children's Services and Chief Nurse, Integrated Care Board (ICB) be requested to develop a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment on children and young people's mental health and wellbeing, in order to better understand and respond to children and young people's mental health and wellbeing needs in Torbay and that this data is used to inform the design of services and that relevant performance indicators be developed to enable the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board to monitor progress of delivery against the targets;
10. that an update on the recommendations in 2 to 9 above be presented to the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board meeting on 22 April 2024; and
11. that the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board will design a spotlight review as part of the 2024/2025 Work Programme to hear the voice of children, young people and their families.

Chairwoman

Meeting: Children's Overview and Scrutiny

Date: 19th February 2024

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Annual Report of the Virtual School (2022- 23)

When does the decision need to be implemented?

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Cllr Nick Bye, Cabinet Members for Children's Services

Director/Divisional Director Contact Details: Nancy Meehan, Director of Children's Services, Nancy.meehan@Torbay.gov.uk, Rachael Williams, Divisional Director Education and SEND Rachael.williams@torbay.gov.uk

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The report sets out the work of the Virtual School for our Cared For Children. The Annual Report details the academic attainment, overview of education provision provided for our children and young people and the joint work conducted to advocate and champion the outcomes for our Cared For Children.
- 1.2 The report is intended to provide detailed information to enable overview and scrutiny to provide both support and challenge in the role as a corporate parent.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1 The report sets out the detailed action that have been undertaken to fulfil the five key statutory duties of the Virtual School. The report covers the outcomes for all Torbay Cared For Children who are either educated in Torbay Schools and in other local authority , it also includes Cared For Children from other authorities and are educated in Torbay Schools.
- 2.2 The overview headlines of the report are:-
 - In Reception there is a downward trend on last year's result, which was a downward trend on the previous year. Only one child (11%) achieved a Good Level of Development.
 - At Key Stage 1 there is a downward trend. In a small cohort only two of the children reached Expected Standard in all three areas – Reading, writing and maths. It should be noted that one child achieved Greater Depth in Reading.

- At Key Stage 2 the outcomes have been exceptionally positive. There has been an upward trend in all areas. The increase on the previous year in Reading is 36%; the increase in Writing is 31%; there has been a modest rise in Maths of 6% and a 21% rise in all children get at least the Expected Standard in Reading, Writing and Maths.
- At KS4 there was an upward trend on the previous year. There was an increase of 8% on the previous year of those achieving a Grade 5+ in English & Maths; and rises between 7 and 8% in those achieving a Grade 5+ in either English or Maths as well as those achieving a Grade 4 in English & Maths.
- At KS5 there was an increase in those achieving L2 qualifications. Only a small number took L3 qualifications and this relates to their Y11 achievements.
- Suspensions - this year's percentage matched the previous year. This is against a backdrop of rising suspensions in the school system nationally. There were no permanent exclusions.
- There has been an upward trend of 1.5% in attendance which has built upon the previous year's increase of attendance of 5.5%.

2.3 The case studies within the report provide an insight into the views of children and young people and the work that has been undertaken with the Virtual School and partners to make changes.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

3.1 We request that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review and note the Annual Report for 2022 – 2023

Appendices

Virtual School Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Background Documents

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Annual Report is prepared by the Headteacher of the Virtual School. The content of the Annual Report is built up over the academic year, with reports going to the Virtual School Governing Body outlining progress, targets and support.
- 1.2 The report brings together all of the work conducted during the academic year and outlines our performance where possible against comparators and national benchmarks.

2. Options under consideration

- 2.1 Not applicable.

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

- 3.1 The Annual Report details the spending associated with Pupil Premium Plus and the allocation to children and young people based on the agreed targets and support within their Personnel Education Plan (PEP).

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 Not applicable

5. Engagement and Consultation

- 5.1 The Annual Report summaries the work of the Virtual School and provides views from children and young people on how they have been supported.

6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

- 6.1 All work of the Virtual School is commission and procured as required.

7. Tackling Climate Change

- 7.1 The Virtual School does not address elements of the Council's plan to tackle climate change.

8. Associated Risks

8.1 .Non identified.

9. Equality Impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

9.1 The Virtual School works to positively advocate and champion for the needs of our Cared For Children with a positive impact.

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people	X		
People with caring Responsibilities	X		
People with a disability	X		
Women or men	X		
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) (Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)	X		
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual			
People who are transgendered	X		
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave			
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and	X		

deprivation)			
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)	X		

10. Cumulative Council Impact

10.1 The Virtual School Annual Report ensures that all parties are able to be informed and make appropriate support and challenge in their role as Corporate Parents.

11. Cumulative Community Impacts

11.1 The Virtual School Annual Report demonstrates how we are supporting children and young people to benefit from their community and opportunities to grow both in their well being and academic progress.

TORBAY COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT (2022-23) OF THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY

NOVEMBER 2023



Contents

Foreward	3
The Virtual School	4
Outcomes for Cared For Children	6
End of Year Results	7
Attendance	14
Children on Part-time Timetables	16
Children not on a School Roll	17
Suspensions	21
Special Educational Needs	28
KS4 Transitions and Post 16 Work	31
Aspirations for Cared For Young People	33
Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children	34
Early Years	34
Post Cared For Work	34
PEPS and PP+	36
PP+ Funded Projects	38
PP+ End of Year Account	50
Support Work	51
Extended Duties	51
Cared For Children Celebrations	54
Priorities	55
Conclusions	56
Appendix 1 - End of Year Outcomes	54
Appendix 2 - List of Local Authorities with Torbay CFC	62
Appendix 2 - PEP Toolkit	
Appendix 4 - Glossary	64

Foreword by the Chair of the VSGB

I am delighted, as Chair of the VSGB, to write this introduction to the thirteenth annual report of the VSGB. The purpose of the VSGB is to take the lead in ensuring that schools fulfil their responsibilities to Cared For Children and Young People and maximise their attainment and achievement and narrow the gap between our Cared For Children and their peers.

This is going to be the final Annual Report written by the current Headteacher as the VSGB and LA were notified in January 2023 of her intention to retire at Christmas 2023. Although this is the end of an era it also gives us the opportunities to reflect on our work and build on the solid foundations laid over the last thirteen years. This is particularly so in the attachment and trauma informed practice but also in that relentless focus on championing the educational outcomes of our Cared For Children and Young People.

I hope you get from the Annual Report how determined we are to ensure our Cared For Children get the very best experience from their early years providers, schools and post 16 providers to ensure the best outcomes they can achieve. The members of the VSGB are very clear that schools need to ensure that our most vulnerable learners are given every opportunity to succeed. This isn't about equality of opportunity but equality of outcome.

The Virtual School works in a very inclusive way. It also looks at the empirical evidence from research about where pupils learn and achieve best. It has a determination to have our children in the very best schools and to keep them in those schools no matter what.

Fortunately, we have not experienced disruption such as seen since the pandemic, but we are seeing a rise in children being anxious to attend school. This is being seen more in the children and young people with the Extended Duties area of work than our Cared For Children.

In terms of our pupils' achievement this year it is pleasing that we have access to national data through the NCER data base. This gives us a base to compare our outcomes with the national data for Cared For Children at EYFS, KS1, 2 and 4. The report gives further detail in the relevant sections. It is really pleasing to note that we have improved on last year's KS2 results where our Cared For Children's outcomes in Reading were the 12th best out of all Local Authorities. I suspect this year we may be the best.

The Virtual School in Torbay provides a tremendous amount of support to our schools both in and out of area and as a result receives a tremendous amount of support from the schools and very positive regard. We can never underestimate the power of relationships and partnership working. This is fundamental to the work, and ultimately, the success and effectiveness of the Virtual School's work.

I trust that the Annual Report will demonstrate our commitment and passion to our children.

Stuart Heron

Chair - TVSGB

The Virtual School

This is the thirteenth annual report of the Virtual School Governing Body as the VSGB was formed during the academic year 2010/11. The Annual Report details the work of the Virtual School during the academic year and will highlight the educational performance of all of our Cared For Children and Young People and the wider work of the Virtual School.

The Virtual School (VS) was set up in 2010 and at that point consisted of a Head teacher (0.5 FTE) and a full time Advisory Teacher. Over the years through support of the Schools Forum and the Local Authority the staffing in the Virtual School has grown which has contributed to the relentless focus of ensuring our Cared For Children achieve their potential. Through a teacher leaving and one teacher reducing their hours a decision was made to change the range of skills the staff have. This was primarily as a result of our schools ensuring that they provide 1:1 interventions in Maths and English particularly in the secondary age group. As a result, two full time Inclusion and Achievement Officers were created in order to give greater opportunities for all the children. The staffing now comprises of the Head teacher (0.6 FTE), 1 Primary Inclusion and Achievement Officer, 1 Secondary Inclusion and Achievement Officer, 1 SENCO with a Maths specialism, 1 Part-Time (0.4FTE) Secondary English Teacher, an Inclusion Officer, a KS4 Transitions Officer, a PEP Co-ordinator, 2 Extended Duties Officers and a 0.6 Admin Officer. At the end of the academic year a consultation was undertaken which saw the Extended Duties Officers move into the Vulnerable Pupils Team. The VSH still had the responsibility for being the strategic lead for this work.

From the 23 March 2020 the team worked from home, and this is continued into the current academic year however during the summer term we saw staff members work in a hybrid way which saw some home and office-based work as well as the regular school visits. The working arrangement of the team is aligned to the best outcome for the children and young people.

The five key responsibilities of the Virtual School are:

1. To make sure there is a system to track and monitor the attainment and progress of Cared For Children.
2. To ensure that all Cared For Children have a robust and effective personal education plan and access to 1:1 support, including personal tuition.
3. To champion the educational needs of Cared For Children across the authority and those placed out of authority.
4. To provide advice and guidance to schools and parents/guardians of post Cared For Children and Young People.
5. To provide strategic leadership through the VSHT to ensure children with a social worker achieve better educational outcomes.

The purpose of the Virtual School Governing Body sees it taking a lead in ensuring that schools fulfil their responsibilities to Cared For Children and maximise their attainment and achievement. The VSGB mirrors the role of school governing bodies in that it provides a strategic view, acts as a critical friend and ensures accountability. It also expects that all its members will be actively committed to the success of the Virtual School.

All of the data about the Virtual School contained in this report will be from the academic year 2022/23 and is solely for Torbay's own Cared For Children.

The Virtual School consists of three groups of Cared For Children (CFC)

- All Torbay CFC who are educated in Torbay schools
- Torbay CFC who are educated in other local authority or independent schools.
- CFC from other authorities and educated in Torbay schools

The main focus of the work of the Virtual School relates to CFC who are of statutory school age but also includes those who are in Early Years settings and those who are post 16.

The school roll at the end of the academic year is shown in the following table:

Age group	Total in Torbay Virtual School (A+B - C)	All CFC in Torbay schools (A)	Torbay CFC in out of area schools (B)	Out of area CFC in Torbay educational provision (C)
Early Years	19	-	-	-
Reception	12	9	5	2
Year 1	15	11	6	2
Year 2	10	4	6	-
Year 3	10	5	5	-
Year 4	15	12	5	2
Year 5	16	10	6	-
Year 6	11	9	2	-
Year 7	15	11	6	2
Year 8	19	11	9	1
Year 9	27	18	11	2
Year 10	31	19	13	1
Year 11	24	10	14	-
Post 16	70	-	-	-
Total of statutory school age	205	129	88	12
GRAND TOTAL	294			

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The number of CFC of statutory school age in the VS at the end of the academic year saw an decrease of eleven from the previous academic year with 205 being in Reception - Y11. Overall, there were twenty fewer young people in the grand total from the previous year.

OFSTED ratings for schools may change within an academic year. Where a school slips into Requires Improvement or Inadequate the VS looks at each individual case and decides whether it is in the child's best interests to maintain their place at that school.

The VS continues to monitor the OFSTED ratings of the schools. At the end of the academic year there were 86% of our CFC in schools which were rated Good or Outstanding. This is an increase of

5.2% on the previous year. There was one child in an Inadequate school in another local authority area. This child has an EHCP and is making progress. Our SENCO attends this child's PEP each term to ensure there is good oversight of the child's educational experiences.

When a school goes into either an Requires Improvement or Inadequate category the VSHT gives a great deal of focus on determining whether the child should stay in the school or move. Many aspects are considered such as the evidence on impact of school moves, the regard the child has for the school and the school has for the child, the progress made, and targets set and a decision is made which does not have a detrimental impact their progress or outcomes. The oversight of the team ensures if the child remains in school or moves to another school careful consideration is made to use PP+ wisely to enhance their educational journey and eventual outcomes.

The VS staff ensure that social workers and the SEN Caseworkers are fully aware that applications for all children but especially Reception and Y7 should only be made to Good or Outstanding schools. Obviously the same is for mid-term transfers but these are discouraged due to the adverse effect on educational attainment.

It should be noted that a two of our local secondary schools have moved from Good to RI in their most recent inspection. As we only have a small number of secondary schools we have continued, if appropriate, to apply for a Y7 place if this is the child's local school and we believe it is in the child's best interests to be at that school. Again, the VS Team will monitor these children closely.

Outcomes for Cared For Children (CFC)

The Department for Education measures the educational outcomes of the children who have been cared for continuously for 12 months. For the performance measures for the academic year ending July 2023 the children whose outcomes are measured are those children who were cared for on 1 April 2022 and remained cared for until 31 March 2023. The progress and attainment of all the children in the Virtual School is important and therefore the data will be captured for the Continuous Care CFC and those who have been cared for outside of 12 months criteria.

The Virtual School measures educational attainment and progress for all Cared for Children. This is beyond the national expectation and allows accurate tracking and intervention. We do not believe the statutory focus on 12 months continuous care CFC is sufficient.

Data is captured termly in the Virtual School. The detail on national Cared For Children outcomes is available but for 2023 but data on absence is from 2022 and exclusions is based on 2021. When the LAIT (Local Authority Interactive Tool) is updated in January more recent data on exclusions and attendance will be available.

Headlines:

1. In Reception there is a downward trend on last year's result, which was a downward trend on the previous two years. Only one child achieved a Good Level of Development - 11.1%. The concern around outcomes for our Early Children has seen the partnership strengthened with the Early Years Team and the reasoning behind the VS's School Readiness Project for those moving into school in September 2023.

2. At Key Stage 1 there was a downward trend again this year. In a small cohort only two of the children Expected Standard in all three areas - Reading, writing and maths. It should be noted that one child achieved Greater Depth in Reading.
3. At Key Stage 2 the outcomes have been exceptionally positive and will be among the best in the country certainly for Reading. There has been an upward trend in all areas. The increase on the previous year in Reading is 36%; the increase in Writing is 31%; there has been a modest rise in Maths of 6% and a 21% rise in all children get at least the Expected Standard in R, W and M.
4. At KS4 there was an upward trend on the previous year. This was expected. There was an increase of 8% on the previous year of those achieving a Grade 5+ in E & M; and rises between 7 and 8% in those achieving a Grade 5+ in either E or M as well as those achieving a Grade 4 in E & M.
5. At KS5 there was an increase in those achieving L2 qualifications. Only a small number took L3 qualifications and this relates to their Y11 achievements.
6. Suspensions - this year's percentage matched the previous year. This is against a back drop of rising suspensions in the school system nationally. There were no permanent exclusions.
7. Attendance - there was an upward trend of 1.5% which built on the previous year's increase of 5.5%.

End of Year Results:

This is the first year since the pandemic normality has resumed with national results for those in Reception, Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4.

As stated earlier the following list detail for those who have been cared for continuously between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023 as well as those who have become cared for during that period.

Reception: At the end of the year there were 12 children in this year group. There were nine children in the continuous care cohort with one achieving a Good Level of Development (11.1%). In the group of 3 children who had been cared for, for less than 12 months, all three achieved a Good Level of Development (100%).

Key Stage 1 - Year 1: There were 8 continuous care children in this year group with 15 Torbay CFC in total. The children should be at ARE (age related expectations) at the end of Year 1. The table below shows the number of children on track to achieve at least ARE in Reading, Writing and Maths.

In the continuous care cohort there was one child with an EHCP with Cognition and Learning as the primary need who attends a special school.

	Reading	Writing	Maths
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Less than 12 months CFC	0	0	0
Continuous care CFC	2 (25%)	2 (25%)	2 (25%)

Year 2: There were 6 continuous cared for (CFC) children in this year group but with 10 Torbay CFC in total. The children are expected to be at the Expected Standard by the end of this year. The table below shows the number of children who were on track to achieve the Expected Standard in Reading, Writing and Maths.

There were 2 (33%) of the continuous care cohort who reached ARE in all three measures.

There are two children in the continuous care cohort who have an EHCP both with Social, Emotional and Mental Health as the primary need. One child attends a mainstream school the other child is in a special school.

One child in the less than twelve-month cohort was on a part-time programme when the child became cared for. This had been in place for quite a long time. This young person is now in school full-time and is a case study which can be found later in this report.

	Reading	Writing	Maths
Less than 12 months CFC	1	1	1
Continuous care CFC	2 (33%)	2 (33%)	2 (33%)

Key Stage 2 - Year 3: There were 7 continuous cared for children in this year group but with 10 Torbay CFC in total. The children are expected to be at ARE by the end of this year.

The table shows those children on track to achieve at least ARE by the end of the year in Reading, Writing and Maths.

	Reading	Writing	Maths
Less than 12 months CFC	1	1	0
Continuous care CFC	3 (43%)	3 (43%)	2 (28.5%)

There were 3 children with EHCPs. One with the primary need being a Severe Learning Difficulty who attends a specialist school and two with SEMH as their primary need. Both of these children attend mainstream schools.

Year 4: There were 12 continuous cared for children in this year group but with 15 Torbay CFC in total. A child is expected to achieve at least ARE by the end of this year.

The following table shows those children on track to achieve at least ARE by the end of year in Reading, Writing and Maths.

	Reading	Writing	Maths
Less than 12 months CFC	2	2	2
Continuous care CFC	5 (42%) 1 child @ GD	2 (16.6%)	3 (25%)

In the continuous cared for cohort there are 5 children with an EHCP. One is for Cognition and Learning and the child attends a special school and four for SEMH with three attending a mainstream school and the other a specialist school.

Year 5: There were 14 continuous cared for children in this year group with 16 overall. A child is expected to achieve ARE at the end of this year.

The table below shows those children on track to achieve at least ARE by the end of this year.

	Reading	Writing	Maths
Less than 12 months CFC	0	0	0
Continuous care CFC	3 (21.4%)	2 (14.3%)	2 (14.3%)

There are eight children with EHCPs in this year group. One has the primary need of a Severe Learning Difficulty with the others all having SEMH as their primary need. Of these seven there are three who attend specialist schools the others all attend mainstream school.

One child received extra tuition to prepare for the 11+ examinations in the summer.

Year 6: There were 10 continuous cared for children but with 11 children in total. This is the end of KS2 and the children undertook their SATS in May. A child is expected to achieve Expected Standard in Reading; Writing; Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling; and Maths.

The following table shows those who achieved Expected Standard in their SATS:

	Reading	Writing	Maths	ES in Reading, Writing and Maths
Less than 12 months CFC	1 (GD)	1 (GD)	1 (GD)	1 (GD)
Continuous care CFC	9 (90%) 2 @ GD	7 (70%) 1 @ GD	6 (60%) 1 @ GD	6 (60%)

Whilst there is a focus through the PEP on ensuring there are interventions for each child to achieve ARE during Y6 the PRIM (performance review and intervention meeting) process commences. This sees a greater focus on individual children and will see the Primary Inclusion and Achievement Officer work with schools to determine who may need an intervention to achieve their potential. This may be undertaken by a school member of staff or the VS Inclusion and Achievement Officer. When the child is placed out of area this will see the Primary CFC Teacher making individual contact with the DT to ensure that interventions are put in place and that the focus is one which meets need.

In the continuous cared for cohort there are four children with EHCPs. All four attend mainstream settings and all four have their primary need as SEMH. Two of these children gained Greater Depth in Reading and one also got Greater Depth in Writing.

Two of the children with EHCP passed the 11+ one gained entry to Churston Ferrers Grammar School the other gained a place in the Selective Stream at The Spires.

Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 and 9)

Year 7: There were 13 continuous cared for children but with 15 children in total. Again children need to achieve Age Related Expectations.

	English	Maths
Less than 12 months CFC	0	0
Continuous care CFC	9 (69.2%)	7 (53.8%)

There are 5 children with EHCPs in the continuous care cohort with 4 of the children in a specialist setting. Of the 5 there one child with a Severe Learning as the primary need. The remaining four have SEMH as their primary need with only one attending a mainstream school.

Year 8: There were 16 continuous cared for children and 19 CFC in total in this year group. The minimum expectation would be ARE. The table below shows the children who have achieved at least ARE.

	English	Maths
Less than 12 months CFC	0	0
Continuous care CFC	6 (37.5%)	6 (37.5%)

There are 8 children with EHCP in the continuous cared for cohort with seven having SEMH as their primary need. Four of these children are educated in special school settings. The eight child with an EHCP has Cognition and Learning as their primary need and also attends a specialist school.

One child in the less than 12 months group had not been in school for a great deal of time when the child became Cared For. The child had been registered as being Electively Home Educated. This child needed intensive work and it was quickly apparent that a Request for Statutory Assessment was needed.

Year 9: There were 25 continuous cared for children and 27 Torbay CFC in total in this year group. Again the minimum national expectation is ARE by the end of Y9. The table shows the children who achieved at least ARE by the end of the year.

	English	Maths
Less than 12 months CFC	1	1
Continuous care CFC	6 (24%)	7 (28%)

There are 10 children with an EHCP in the continuous cared for cohort and 1 in the less than 12 months cohort. Six are in specialist schools with three in mainstream schools. All of the children have as their primary need.

It should be noted that some schools are now choosing to commence GCSE courses in Y9. This now means that school will report attainment either as above, on or below ARE or as a GCSE grade. When commencing the GCSE course it is essential that the VS also receives the end of KS4 target to ensure the child is on track.

Key Stage 4 - Year 10:

There were 26 continuous cared for children and 31 Torbay CFC in total in this year group. At the start of the year targets for the end of KS4 were set from each school's Fisher Family Trust (D) data set. This data set uses prior attainment data and contextual factors to predict outcomes that a young person should achieve in line with the top 25% of students in similar contexts. Using this data 12 children should achieve at least a Grade 4 in English and 11 children a Grade 4 in Maths.

The table below shows the attainment at the end of Y10:

	English Grade 4+	Maths Grade 4+
Less than 12 months CFC	1	0
Continuous care CFC	5 (16%)	4 (13%)

Through the PEP process for these children not on track to achieve their predicted grade interventions will be put into place.

There are 14 continuous cared for children with an EHCP. Of these children 5 have an EHCP with Moderate Learning Difficulty as the primary need with 1 have a Severe Learning Difficulty and 8 with SEMH as their primary need. All but four of the fourteen are in specialist settings are in specialist settings.

Year 11/ End of Key Stage 4: There were 23 continuous cared for young people and 24 Torbay young people in total in this year group. In terms of the GCSE results it should be noted that one child who was not cared for at the end of Y11 did count in the GCSE results as they were continuously cared for during the required period and therefore will be counted in the national data. The following table gives details of the end of KS4 results for the continuous care young people.

	5A*-C or Grade 4+ including E&M	5A* - C	EBACC	Grade 4+ (or C+ pre 2017) in E & M	Grade 4+ (or C+ pre 2017) in English (Lit or Lang)	Grade 4+ (or C+ pre 2017) in Maths
Torbay CFC 2023	25% (6)	25% (6)	1 (4.2%)	25% (6)	33.2% (8)	25% (6)
Torbay CFC 2022	13.1% (3)	18.1% (4)	0	13.6% (3)	31.8% (7)	18.1% (4)
Torbay CFC 2021	24.2% (8)	27.2% (9)	3.03% (1)	27.2% (9)	42.4% (14)	30.3% (10)
Torbay CFC 2020	25% (5)	30% (6)	5% (1)	20% (4)	40% (8)	25% (5)
Torbay CFC 2019	14.3% (4)	14.3% (4)	7.1% (2)	14.3% (4)	32.1% (9)	21.4% (6)
Torbay CFC 2018	33.3% (7)	33.3% (7)	0	38.1% (8)	42.8% (9)	38.1% (8)

Torbay CFC 2017	13.6% (3)	22.7% (5)	4.5% (1)	13.6% (3)	22.7% (5)	27% (6)
Torbay CFC 2016	13.3%	13.3%	0%	20%	27%	27%
Torbay CFC 2015	14%	14%	0%	14%	18%	18%
Torbay CFC 2014	0	8%	0%	8%	20%	8%

Based on KS2 SATS results 11 (44%) young people in this cohort should have achieved at least a Grade 4 in English and 11 (44%) in Maths. It is, therefore, disappointing that they didn't achieve in line with the predictions from KS2. This underachievement, however, also needs to be seen in the context of the impact of Stability which looks at placement moves and types of accommodation or school and numbers of social workers which may adversely affect outcomes for our young people. This is a large piece of work which was undertaken two years ago and may need to be revisited.

One child who was predicted at KS2 to gain Grade 6s in English and Maths and was a pupil at a selective school was so poorly that it was decided to be in the child's best interests not to sit the GCSEs. This was not a decision taken lightly but the child's emotional health and future safety had to take priority over taking GCSEs. Another child with high anxiety was well supported by the child's school and through the school's resources and PP+ this young person was provided with 1:1 tuition through Y11 to ameliorate the impact of poor attendance through anxiety. The 1:1 was undertaken in school but ensured that with a bespoke teaching timetable the young person achieved the grades predicted from KS2.

Comparing the data over the previous nine years the outcomes this year are not in our lowest outcomes neither are they the best for the cohort. It is pleasing though to see the upward trend. The impact of two years of disrupted education whilst a factor cannot be used as an excuse but may have impacted on eventual grades. The young people will have been offered the opportunity for intervention on a 1:1 basis and those in mainstream schools the additionality of 'period 6'. This is something the majority of mainstream schools put in place to help accelerate or consolidate learning.

There are 12 children with EHCP in the continuous cared for cohort only three attending a mainstream school.

The main points are that the results were disappointing this year as not all achieved in line with their predicted grades from KS2 but there were no major surprises as the underperformance was being predicted from Y10 and despite interventions, this was not able to be overcome.

All of this year group had Y12 plans in place by the end of their academic year in June and our KS4 Transitions Officer or our SENCO if they had an EHCP attended PEPS in the Spring and Summer Terms in order to support the transition into post 16 provisions.

Key Stage 5 (end of Y13)

The level of courses undertaken by those in Y13 is totally dependent upon outcomes from their Y11 courses. This year there was a rise in the numbers completing a L2 course but a decline in both Y1 and Y3. The Level 1 is a concern and this must be monitored closely and data checked each term.

Attendance

The Virtual School wants all children to have the best possible attendance at their individual schools to enable each and every child to reach their full potential.

There is a strong link between good school attendance and achieving good results for children. Children who frequently miss school may fall behind in their work which may affect their future prospects. Good school attendance also shows future employers that a young person is reliable, more likely to achieve well and play a positive role in their community.

Very often, prior to children becoming cared for their attendance at school has been poor although not in all cases.

As of September 2015, the Department for Education (DfE) announced that any student whose attendance falls below 90% will be classed as a Persistently Absent student. Therefore, if a student misses 19 or more days over an academic year they will be classed as Persistently Absent.

The DfE say 'If over 5 academic years a pupil has attendance of 90% the child will miss a half of a school year, that's a lot of lost education.'

The Virtual School promotes good attendance through ensuring fostering families have due diligence to good attendance as well as the children's social worker. Contact is made with children whose attendance has been a concern prior to coming into care to check what issues may have prevented good attendance. From the information received a plan will be written which will have action for all parties, the child, the school, the carer, the Social Worker and the VS. We all expect children to be at school unless the child is seriously unwell.

Each term the VS celebrates excellent attendance with the issuing of a certificate and for those with 100% attendance a book token. There are also attendance awards at our Annual Celebration of Achievement.

Attendance is now collected daily for all children but for those for whom there is a concern this is done on a twice-daily basis. The Virtual School commissioned a service through procurement processes called WelfareCall to obtain the daily attendance of all our children no matter where they go to school and that by commissioning this service it means that our children, no matter where they go to school, have a focus on excellent attendance.

The attendance monitoring is also in place for our KS5 cohort although this is not a daily telephone call but a weekly one as KS5 programmes of study consist of 16 hours across five days unlike those in R-Y11 who have a timetable 5 days a week. Our KS4 Transition Officer monitors the attendance and will act where necessary if attendance drops as we are keen to ensure the young people remain engaged and do not become NEET.

Attendance Key Points

1. After each data drop attendance was RAG rated. The RAG is as follows:
GREEN = 95% and above
AMBER = 91% - 94%
RED = 90% and below.

The Inclusion Officer collects the reasons for an absence in school and will know if it is due to illness or otherwise. Analysis of the absences looks for patterns. The VS has a policy of no holidays in school time for our CFC unless it is a school-based activity and part of the school curriculum.

If a child is rated as a RED the Inclusion Officer will contact all parties in order to formulate a plan around improving the attendance. When a child is rated as AMBER contact will be made with all parties to say the child's attendance rate is a concern and an expectation will be set for improvement.

2. Seven years ago, attendance was a focus area for improvement and since then attendance has improved incrementally until the onset of the pandemic. It then had an upward trend from the dip in 2021 and there is another small increase this year. For the academic year ending in 2023 the overall attendance figure was 91.2%.
3. One area the Virtual School staff need to consider is how to ensure children who are Cared For who are living with parents have good school attendance. This is something which we have encountered during the year and our usual support mechanisms have not had the desired impact. This is an area that needs a coordinated response from the child's school, the VS and the child's SW as well as involving the child in trying to raise their belief in themselves and the value of education.

4. Over the last three years the numbers of Persistent Absentees has increased. In the academic year 2020-21 there were 73 children classified as PA; the following year it was 58 in total of whom 47 were continuous care children. For this academic year there were 38 in total with 35 of those being continuous care children. We are moving in the right direction but slowly. Suspensions and those not on a school roll will impact on this figure.
5. Attendance will continue to be a focus not only for the VS but also foster carers and the child's social worker as children need to be in school to benefit from it.

	Primary	Secondary	Overall
Attendance 2023	96%	87.5%	92%
Attendance 2022	94%	87%	90.54%
Attendance 2021	93%	82%	85%
Attendance 2020	95.3%	94%	94.8%
Attendance 2019	97%	90.15%	95%
Attendance 2018	97.5%	94%	95%
Attendance 2017	97.5%	95.1%	96%
Attendance 2016	96.8%	94.7%	95.7%
Attendance 2015	97.99%	93.33%	95.7%
Attendance 2014	92.34%	92.36%	92.35%

Children on Part-time Timetables

During the academic year there was one child on part-time timetables due to behaviour concerns which was already in place when the child became Cared For following being on a Child Protection Plan. The child had a very minimal timetable but our Primary Inclusion and Achievement Officer undertook a piece of work to work alongside the child and the parent with whom the child was living with. Good working relationships were formed with the parent and child and the school and the programme increased until the child was back in school full time. This was an excellent piece of work and is a case study later in this report.

There were a small number who had a part-time programme during their transition into a new school. The time period would be no longer than four weeks and for many a two-week transition was more than appropriate. These transitions are closely monitored by the allocated team member and recorded through the PEP process.

All part-time programmes are closely monitored by the Inclusion Officer in order that a timely return to full time education is achieved. If a child has an EHCP the SENCO also has a monitoring duty to ensure the rigour of the programme and will attend all PEPS.

Children not on a School Roll

The following table shows the number of children not on a school roll during this academic year. All of them had an EHCP and SEN were either unable to identify provision or there was a need for a bespoke programme. Unless otherwise stated their programmes were between 20 - 25 hours per week.

Year Group	Last on roll	Plans	Actions	EOTAS Provision
R	Not applicable	Not school ready and was a summer birthday.	It was agreed that it was in the child's best interests to be held back a year and attend nursery until the Summer Term when the child turned five. Child also a priority for the School Readiness Project.	Child continued to attend the nursery provision which had been in place since becoming Cared For.
Y1 EHCP			Was on roll at local primary school when became cared for; then moved out of area; now moved back into area. SEN identified two local schools but one was RI. First school now named on EHCP. Start date	

Y7 EHCP	June 2022	Placed sourced in mainstream school for September 2022. Unable to maintain this so package sources and became EOTAS.	Place sourced in independent school - went on roll January 2023.	Package of tuition incorporating English and Maths alongside social and emotional interventions.
Y8 EHCP	Previously EHE September 2022 in Torbay	<p>Very clear that child needed to be assessed as SEMH needs were very high. Child was Section 20 so Inclusion Officer worked with the family member with PR to submit the RSA.</p> <p>New school applied for and VS very impressed with their trauma informed understanding and approach. School undertook transition plan but it became apparent that specialist setting needed even with the school's TIP in place.</p>	<p>Became cared for in August. Was previously EHE but deemed unsuitable prior to BCF. Application was made for local school</p> <p>Child then moved to Powys in Wales.</p> <p>Child has had at least one more placement move.</p>	<p>Transition programme on engagement with YMCA.</p> <p>Welsh school visited the residential provision in order to form good relationships initially.</p> <p>Home supported with visits to school.</p> <p>Child unable to access school and alternative provision applied for.</p> <p>Residential staff provided informal education experiences as child unable to</p>

			The RSA process is delayed each time a child moves into another LA.	form trusting relationships with education staff.
Y9 EHCP	Not on roll when became Cared For	Number of placement moves and inability to source appropriate school placement.	<p>Every time a child with an EHCP the 15 days of consultation commences which puts delay in the system for the child but clearly it is important to ensure the school setting is the right school setting.</p> <p>Eventually escalation process was followed as the home LA was not working to timescales. A school place was found. Now engaging well with very good attendance.</p>	<p>From placement received SEMH interventions as well as 14 hours of tuition per week.</p> <p>Went on roll of specialist school in October 2022.</p>
Y9 EHCP	On roll of mainstream school in Y8 and then attended alternative provision.	Child was placed out of area and has had a placement move and now lives with a connected carer. There have been a number of moves around the country.	We have been successful in gaining a place at a mainstream school, then following an interim review at Torbay's SEMH provision. Since then there have been at least three placement moves to previous addresses.	Unable to put in tuition as regular moves of accommodation.

Y9 EHCP	Not on a school roll when became cared for	Residential placement plus school place found. Unfortunately a number of placement moves due to notice being served. Consultation period always followed but either school cannot meet need or placement serves notice.	Specialist, independent school is required.	Unable to access tuition despite it being set up.
Y8 EHCP	September 2022	Placement moves have seen delays due to consultation period.	Tuition in place while awaiting a school place	Place commenced in mainstream school in January 2023.
Y10 EHCP		Throughout Y10 placement moves have interrupted the consultation periods.	Mentoring was in place when in the SE of England but unable to source similar in new areas and yp refused any interventions as very unhappy about moving.	
Y11	Became cared for in Summer Term 2023.	Had not been in school for two years. Assessment made as not well enough to access any programme.	Consideration of a RSA.	

Y11	Placed in LA in SE England.	Schools applied for but LA not supporting access for schools of CFC from other LAs due to high demand by USAC	Tuition put in place for ENGLISH and Maths	Functional Skills to be followed in preparation for post 16 work.
Y11 EHCP	YP on an EOTAS package when became cared for in Y11	Package in place had been set up by SEN and was for 25 hours per week.	YP had programme which included English and Maths and vocational studies.	This was deemed an appropriate programme for this yp.

Suspensions

Please note that the Department of Education has changed the terminology to suspension rather than exclusion. There continues to be a focus on finding alternative sanctions rather than suspension. Again, the rigour the VS has with attendance monitoring means that suspension figures are accurate and timely.

The following table gives more detail about the exclusions:

Year Group	Cared for 12m+	In area/Out of area	Number of exclusions	Number of sessions (1 day = 2 sessions)	M/F	EHCP
R	Y	In	1	1	m	n
Y1	Y	In	3	11	m	Yes
Y4	Y	In	1	1	m	Yes
Y5	Y	Out	2	42	m	Yes
Y7a	Y	In	2	14	m	Yes
Y7b	Y	In	1	6	m	No

Y8a	Y	Out	2	12	m	No
Y8b	Y	Out	1	1	m	Yes
Y8c	Y	Out	2	8	m	Yes
Y8d	Y	In	2	4	f	Yes
Y9a	Y	In	1	6	m	No
Y9b	Y	In	5	25	m	Yes
Y9c	Y	Out	5	17	f	Yes
Y9d	Y	In	16	36	m	Yes
Y9e	Y	Out	14	36	m	No
Y9f	Y	Out	1	4	f	No
Y9g	Y	In	4	13	f	No
Y9h	Y	In	1	6	f	Yes
Y9i	Y	Out	2	12	f	No
Y9j	Y	In	5	16	f	Yes
Y9k	Y	In	9	22	m	No
Y10a	Y	In	10	41	f	Yes
Y10b	Y	In	7	23	m	Yes
Y10c	Y	In	1	2	f	No
Y10d	Y	Out	3	32	f	No
Y11a	Y	Out	7	11	m	Yes

Y11b	Y	Out	1	2	m	Yes
Y11c	Y	In	1	3	f	Yes
Y11d	Y	Out	3	8	m	No

There were 29 children and young people subject to suspensions in the continuous care group. It was very disappointing to see a suspension for a Reception child. This saw an immediate response and some trauma informed work carried out at the school. There was no repeat for that child.

Almost all of the suspensions were for persistent disruptive behaviour. There were twelve of the children with an EHCP and six of those children attend a specialist school. It is therefore disappointing to see one of those children be suspended on 16 occasions. There are two in area schools causing us concern. One is a specialist provision and the other a mainstream school both have recently joined a MAT. This is something we hope will settle down as have other schools following a change in leadership.

The year group which is concerning is Y9 as eleven young people had at least one suspension. It should be noted that this year group always tends to see young people testing boundaries and for this year group they experienced two years of disrupted education.

For Child Y9e an intensive piece of work was carried out in order to maintain the school place. The case study below describes the work in detail. This is currently a really successful intervention.

Again for Child Y10a another piece of intensive work has been carried out and we have ensured there was no permanent exclusion for this young person. There is also a case study of this at the end of this section.

The percentage of continuous cared for children suspended this year was 17% using only the CC . This is not comparable with last year's figure as all children were counted in.

It is clear that the training we are doing to support schools to create relational policies is very necessary raining. This of course will only impact on the in area schools.

Case Study - Yr 9e

- **What was the issue?**

- **Relational traumas and losses experienced:-**

- Came into care in 2016, following worries around intrafamilial sexual abuse, domestic abuse in parental relationship and neglect
- Currently has no contact with birth parents, 2 younger siblings who live elsewhere, or with a younger half-sibling who remains with mother
- Part of cohort for whom transition to secondary school was significantly impacted by Covid school shut downs

- Child A has been with the same long-term foster carers since coming into care, and is reported to be very settled at home. School, however, were raising increasing concerns throughout Year 9 that Child A was missing multiple lessons a week; using language which challenges (swearing at, using derogatory terms) towards staff; and found it particularly difficult to allow adults to take the lead, relying more on peer feedback to guide his behaviour. School were responding by issuing an increasing number of internal and external suspensions. There was a worrying narrative within school that Child A did not want relationships with adults in school.

• Our journey so far....

- I met weekly with Child A during the summer term of 2023 as part of my attachment lead work. The focus of our work together has been: allowing him to experience felt safety within the school environment; increase his emotional awareness through access to adult modelling/narration/labelling; building problem-solving skills; and expanding his tolerance of being close with, and at time led by, another adult. To achieve this, we have used a combination of restorative techniques, Theraplay-style activities and general relationships building activities, allowing me to gain insight into Child A's world, advocate for him as needed and carry out restorative work around key incidents.
- Alongside this, I have worked closely with the team within school to explore alternative ways of working with Child A. This has included:
 - Supporting school to access private SALT assessment via funded target. Child A has bilateral hearing loss and wears hearing aids, but it is known that these were not often in a working state or used prior to him coming into care. This, along with the pattern of Child A's behaviours, suggested he may have undiagnosed speech, language and communication needs. The SALT assessment indicated needs severe enough for Child A to fit the profile for a diagnosis of Developmental Language Disorder.
 - Supporting school to arrange for full EP assessment following outcome of SALT assessment.
 - Arranging additional follow-up meetings with Child A's team, pulling in SENCO and school's SEND liaison officer, to ensure both Child A's trauma and SEND needs are being addressed in the school context.
 - Challenging narrative around Child A's attachment needs by modelling approach and then bringing in key adults within the school into our relationship, so that Child A now has a key adult he can reach out to within school.
 - Providing 'on-call' support and advice to school, including visiting at times of 'crisis' to support Child A and staff.
 - Encouraging continued 1:1 academic support through use of private tutoring, to support Child A to make progress in core subjects in a less overwhelming learning environment.

• What difference has this made?

- Through our work together, Child A has had a positive experience of a relationship with an adult linked to education. At the beginning of our time together, drawing assessments carried out with Child A highlighted that he could not identify any trusted adult within the school context, and did not yet feel safe enough to share his experiences within school. Child A is now often very chatty in our sessions, sharing his thoughts and feelings, and school have fed back that Child A visibly "lightens up" when he see's me for sessions.
- As a result, Child A is beginning to develop trust and feel able to take relational risks in asking for support from others. Despite finding it trickiest to reach out at times of crisis, Child A has also asked for me to be called in on a particularly challenging day so he could share what was happening for him. He is also now exploring seeking support from his key adult.
- School have a more thorough understanding of Child A's trauma and SEND needs, and are working with him in a more informed way as a result. He now has an identified key adult and team around him in school; interventions in place around his speech and language needs; an identified safe space to use when overwhelmed; and a 'working together' plan that both he and staff have bought into.
- Overall, the above work contributed to a significant decline in missed lessons and a reduction in suspensions for Child A towards the end of the summer term of 2023.

• Areas for further action

- Child A has had a tricky start to this academic year, but school continue to be more open to support options and are no longer using external suspensions as a consequence for missed learning. The Virtual School have been invited in to undertake training for his teachers, to extend the understanding of Child A's needs beyond his key team. This will be delivered in the second half of Autumn Term.
- I continue to work closely with Child A's team, including the SENCO, to ensure interventions are in place. A key next area of focus is ensuring Child A's social needs are also effectively met, as he continues to find building and maintaining healthy, reciprocal peer relationships more challenging. We are exploring how to use his interests (e.g. Dungeons and Dragons) to support him with this.
- Regular check-ins continue whilst Child A builds his relationships within school.

• Immediate next steps

- Awaiting outcome of EP assessment to inform of possible need for RSA

Case Study - Storyboard - Y10a (M)

What was the issue?

M experienced significant early trauma and was removed from their birth parents as an infant due to substance misuse and neglect. Concern that there was undiagnosed FASD.

March 22 M came into the care of the LA following a breakdown in relationship with adoptive parents.

M was experiencing heightened behaviours and these were challenging for the adults that were supporting them to manage.

M PEX from school but rescinded and attended an assessment placement at the alternative provision. They had suspended M several times although support had been put in place as well as being educated off site.

Hearing impairment - hearing impairment team working with M.
Struggles with mental health.

Our journey so far....

M had a good relationship with a key worker at their mainstream school, as well as the school counsellor Implementation of the following:

- Increased safety cues with 'meet and greet' as well as regular 'check-ins'
- Set up a team around the child within school - made a visual team template and timetable of which EAA will be available at certain times throughout the day
- Direct support to be continued with school counsellor and key adult
- Interventions put in place to provide education around peer relationships
- Visual timetable to give security and predictability as M may not respond to auditory input alone
- 1:1 supervision to ensure M can manage their learning and provide safety
- Effective communication, ensuring there is mutual respect; language used is simple and free from jargon, positive
- Provide sequential sensory experiences

School became more difficult for Child M and a real desire to return to their mainstream school

- Working with professionals involved / providing support with a transition plan back into mainstream
- Communication with key professionals /school staff provide reflective space and opportunities to share best practice and understanding of response of Child M
- Referral made for a SALT assessment and to gather further evidence for a request for statutory assessment for an EHCP
- Develop a further safety plan with the social worker
- Request school to have discussions, based on the voice of the child, to ensure the transition plan was completed at M's pace
- Provide the right support needed for the child and the carer

Additionally, we held regular meeting between sending school and receiving school as well as carer and adoptive mum.

It has been our aim from initiating the work to offer a transparent approach to development, and share information as progress is made to all involved.

What have we done?

- To support the child and ensure their needs are met through direct work by key adults and indirect work
- Work alongside EP and Speech and Language Therapist
- Work closely with the pastoral practitioner of the school in the provision of a team around M •
Meet and greet
- Regular check-ins from team
- Visual timetables created to provide felt safety
- Safe space created
- Engage outreach worker to provide continued education around peer relationships • Art Therapy
- Ongoing support of foster carer, school staff with strategies. Home/school partnership agreement for consistency of strategies
- Key adult

What difference has this made?

- The child has built trust in their key adults and been on a journey from dependency to interdependency; increasing felt safety by having a bespoke timetable to meet need
- Able to follow direction from school staff
- Increased awareness of feelings and emotions alongside strategies to help them settle to learn and to keep self safe within the community
- School attendance has improved significantly and suspensions have decreased.

Areas for further action

- Develop positive relationships within friendship groups
- Build resilience
- RSA for an EHCP as a matter of urgency
- A small nurturing environment/ small group work to access learning
- M needs to be taught a visual system to help her to understand and regulate her emotions, such as Zones of Regulation <https://www.zonesofregulation.com/index.htm>
- The findings of the SALT assessment support a referral for an assessment for FASD

Immediate next steps

- There have been inconsistencies with social workers. Ensure that there is a consistent social worker for Child M and develop a positive relationship
- Review PEP targets

Other work:

Key adult recommendation - training in Emotional Logic.

Special Educational Needs

Torbay has a higher percentage of all pupils with SEN in particular those with Education Health Care Plans. This is also reflected in the number of CFC with special educational needs in the Virtual School.

At the end of the academic year there were 77 children, of statutory school age, with EHCP's in the Virtual School. This sees 37.7% of the VS's school population being subject to an EHCP. Of these 77 children and young people 44 of them are in specialist provisions. This immediately raises concerns as the evidence from the Rees Report sees children not in mainstream schools doing less well than their peers in mainstream in terms of reaching age related expectations. This however does not mean they do not make good progress it means they do not reach the level expected for their age group set by the DfE and they are in these provisions because they best meet the child or young person's needs.

It should be noted that there is a reduction of five of children and young people with EHCP's. This has halted the previous five years of increases and may indicate that the right support is being put in place in a timely manner.

Of the 77 young people with an EHCP, 73 are in the continuous care cohort. There were 12 young people in the Y11 cohort with an EHCP with 10 of these being in specialist provisions.

There were 49 children and young people identified as needing SEN support in those of statutory school age.

When combining the number with an EHCP and those at SEN support the data shows that 61.7% of those of statutory school age have special educational needs and are on the VS's SEN register. The largest area with primary need is SEMH which is not a surprise when consideration is made for the journey the child has made in becoming cared for.

The VS has supported schools in 8 Requests for Statutory Assessment during this academic year.

Our SENCO has oversight of all the children and young people with an EHCP and liaises between our SEN Team and Designated Teachers and very often the host school's SENCO. There is a strong working link between the VS SENCO and the named CFC SEN Officer although there is a plan to change this arrangement and share out CFC amongst more of the SEN Casework Officers.

Here is an example of some of the direct work the SENCO undertakes:

What was the issue?

- The young person was struggling to manage in school even with the support of his EHCP. He had managed in KS1 with a personalised programme and the support of a 1:1 but as he moved into KS2 the gap between him and his friends was widening and he struggled to understand why he could not access areas that he had been allowed to in KS1 as freely due to them being used by the current KS1

Our journey so far....

- The school, although trying really hard to manage this young person's needs had realised that he would need specialised provision longer term. At his Annual Review in Y2 they requested Educational Psychologist report and SEN attendance at meetings from Devon - as his EHCP is maintained by Devon. Due to Covid restrictions the Ed Psych could only meet virtually and the young person was unable to engage. SEN did not attend the Annual Review and there was difficulties in getting responses to queries

What we have done.

Virtual School liaised with Torbay SEN who agreed to attend another Annual Review and the Head of the Virtual School agreed to use some of the VS allocation for Ed Psych to get a robust assessment. Following this Torbay SEN challenged Devon SEN in finding a suitable school.

The VS supported the carer in arranging visits to various schools, who then met the young person but none could meet need or did not have capacity.

Torbay VS and SEN again challenged Devon in finding a suitable provision

What difference has this made?

The young person has moved to a special school in Plymouth. He is now accessing classroom learning fulltime and has started to make small steps of progress.

He was seen by the fostering agency Educational Psychologist who has recommended a high sensory diet in allowing him to regulate. The VS purchased a bike helmet which he could personalise to encourage this activity - he can now ride a bike independently.

Other recommendations included :-

Weighted blankets/toys - VS are using PP+ to purchase a weighted cat as the young person expressed interest in this and likes the carers cat.

A Trapeze bar - another recommendation was hanging from bars to help regulation. This is also being purchased by the VS using PP+

Carrying weights - school already have resources

Further recommendations will be looked at in future PEPs as it was felt that this could lead to overload if all put in together

Deep pressure rollers, swings, scooter, medicine ball, low frequency massage, emotional literacy

These recommendations have been shared with another school who had a young person who was struggling with emotional regulation

Outcomes at end of Key Stage 2 and 4 for children with SEN

At Key Stage 2 there were 2 children at SEN Support and 4 with Education, Health and Care Plans. Of the children with EHCP 4 of them have Social and Emotional Health as their primary need. The table following gives detail of their performance in the SATS.

	CFC in VS	Reached at least EXS Reading	Reached at least EXS Writing	Reached at least EXS Maths	Reached at least EXS in Reading, Writing and Maths
Number with EHCP	4	4	3	3	3
Number at School Support	2	1	0	0	0

At Key Stage 4 there were twelve young people with an EHCP with four at SEN support.

	Total in Y11	Grade 4+ E & M	Grade 4+ E only	Grade 4+ M only	5+ at Grade 4+
SEN Support	4	0	0	0	9
EHCP	12	0	1	0	0

Only two of the 12 young people with an EHCP were in a mainstream school. The outcomes above had been expected other than for one young person with an EHCP who was too poorly emotionally to take

GCSEs this academic year. This was not a decision taken lightly but one in the best interests of the child just prior to the public examinations commencing.

KS4 Transitions Work and Post 16

This is now an established post in the Virtual School with the post holder being in place for approximately two years.

This post sees a significant amount of time working with young people in Y11 in order to aid their transition into Y12 and ensure that in September of their Y12 their destination remains the same and aligned to their feedback and wishes.

The role is having an impact and good working relationships with the schools, colleges, foster carers and most importantly the young people are evidenced. Laila will attend all Spring and Summer PEPS of the Y11s (unless they have an EHCP when Anna Walker, our SENCO attends) and ensures all is in place and if necessary, equipment needed for the course is sourced through the final Y11 PEP.

WelfareCall collects the attendance figures for our post 16 cohort on a weekly basis and this sees the KS4 Transitions Officer focussing on having oversight of the attendance and address concerns where necessary, enabling her time to be on focused on impact for young people. A large proportion of the postholder's time is spent attending and supporting PEPS.

Work for post 16 also includes ensuring all NEET learners have access to support from Careers South West, or their equivalent, if out of area and training for the Care Experienced Team on PEPS as well as for post 16 providers. There are excellent links between the VS and staff at South Devon College who are our main provider of post 16 education.

The VS also benefitted from a post 16 PP+ pilot funding grant. This had been applied for in the previous academic year but we were unsuccessful. It was a complete surprise when it came through! Our KS4 Transitions Officer worked closely with SDC and the Youth Worker appointed from the Youth Trust. The project commenced with one worker and was slow to get off the ground. In the new year another youth worker was employed. This was very successful as the young people referred by SDC to the youth worker really engaged well and the youth worker was available outside of normal office hours. The only downside to the project was it was limited to those living in Torbay. If this was to be repeated it needs to capture all in this age group no matter where they live.

Here is a case study from the KS4 Transitions Officer:

Case Study

What was the issue?

One of our YP was doing very well with their A Levels and has always intended to study medicine but unfortunately, they received low mocks exam outcomes due to not listening to correct instructions from teachers and the YP needed to structure what teachers are advising, helping to support them.

We have been trying to help them change their work habit and find a better way to revise, which suited the YP. The YP has been playing games and not studying. The YP has said that they are being lazy and need to try and bring their grades back up if they want any chance of going to medical college.

Our journey so far....

We are aiming to help the YP achieve the relevant grades they require to be able to get into medical college.

What have we done?

We have maintained communication with the YP, school and carer throughout the process. We have ensured that regular PEP meetings were held to help support the YP get back on track for the grades required. We have ensured that the YP's voice was heard at the PEP meetings and that we could put a plan in place to help support them and give them the relevant information and guidance to help them achieve the best possible results. Add letter from Jane (VSHT) and contact with Carer.

What difference has this made?

The difference our work has made is that with our support the YP has helped them achieve better results, as they have re sat their tests and had a much better outcome than before. Carer paying for chemistry tuition during the holidays.

Areas for further action

To keep up with communications with the YP, school and carer to maintain open communication channels so if the YP feels they require support again then we can all work together to help them achieve the best to their ability.

Immediate next steps

- To hold a Personal Education Plan to see how the YP is progressing with their A Levels and to address any areas of concern there may be.

Aspirations for our Cared For Young People

The Virtual School is determined that all of our Cared For Young People have the very best opportunity within education to achieve their academic potential.

There are many factors which can impact on outcomes and our young people will have had varied experience of education prior to becoming cared for. This may include poor attendance and parental engagement, and this may stem from the adult's own experience of education. Having stability in their home life is also important once they become cared for and we know that placement stability is a real factor in supporting better educational outcomes. Therefore, we need to encourage a system where all the adults in the young person's life have high aspirations for them. This includes school staff, fostering families, social workers as well as the VS Team. Our job in the VS is to ensure all do their utmost for our young people.

Each young person will have a different starting point in both their care and educational journey. Young people become cared for at all different ages. Many young people who become cared for in their Y10 or 11 do not achieve well in their GCSE examinations at the end of Y11 but this is not the end of their educational journey. There needs to be an acknowledgement that our young people may not achieve outcomes in line with their peers at the usual end points such as the end of KS4 (Y11) but that with a little extra support and time they will achieve them later.

Whilst a number of care experienced young people do access higher education we also need to ensure that we offer a broad range of support to our young people to identify appropriate routes to achieve good outcomes and that university is just one avenue to explore alongside career aspirations. There are many other ways to achieve not only academic outcomes but economic well-being as well and our young people need to know the range of opportunities available to them. This will include apprenticeships and well as employment which offers future opportunity to progress.

To this end, we in the VS, will strive to support our young people to reach their potential by:

- supporting and challenging schools for both individuals and cohorts on underachievement or exclusion
- providing support to fostering families in order for them to be aspirational
- offering a wide range of opportunities such as university taster days for those in KS2 and KS4 and open these to all abilities
- good careers advice which is quality assured if school based or from Careers South West or their equivalent in the area where the young person lives
- offering literacy resources such as Letterbox, Book Buzz and access to the online Encyclopaedia Britannica
- ensuring access to 11+ coaching if appropriate
- offering wider curricular offers such as STEM days and arts based activities
- facilitating engagement with a range of careers based on a young person's interests

- our KS4 Transitions Officer attending Y11 PEPS from the Spring Term in order to gain an understanding of career aspirations and ensure that barriers are identified which may impact on this aspiration.
- responding to underachievement by ensuring extra support such as 1:1 tuition is offered.
- supporting all professionals to understand their role in raising aspirations.

Finally, our young people need to know that they have adults who believe in them and their potential to do well. This will allow the young people to believe in their own potential too and therefore give them the desire to do well. This is one of the most difficult things to achieve if a young person does not believe in their own abilities.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and Young People

There have been 20 UASC in the Virtual School during the year. All 20 are male. There have been 18 who were in Y12 or 13 on arrival. Of these 18 were studying on a course designed for ESOL in a FE college close to where they are living.

There were 2 of statutory school age one in Y10 and one in one in Y11. Both of these boys were in mainstream schools in the local authorities where they were living.

Early Years

During the academic year the Inclusion Officer, who was overseeing all Early Years PEPS has worked closely with the LA's Early Years Team in order to ensure our Cared For Children who attend Early Years settings have an evidenced, high quality experience. This has seen the allocation of an Early Years Advisory Teacher who will quality assure a sample of PEPs each term as well as attending PEPS when necessary or requested by the VS. This then enhances the links the VS has developed by attendance at the Early Years Provider network meetings and gives greater oversight and support to our Cared For Children who attend Early Years settings.

The Head of Service for Early Years also sits on the VS Governing Body.

Post Cared For Work

This area of work is one added to our brief around five years ago. The work is for those children who were previously cared for and moved either to live with a family either with a final adoption order or a Special Guardianship Order. The work is one which sees the VS offer advice and guidance to those holding the Adoption Order or Special Guardianship Order.

Here is a case study from one piece of work undertaken this year.

Case Study - PCFC- Child A

CONFIDENTIAL

What was the issue?

Carer A got in touch with virtual school to have a conversation around what support could be given to a Carer caring for a previously cared for child.

Carer explained during this conversation some of the challenges she is facing especially around Child A feeling "different" from other children as she knows she is adopted. Also, she discussed how she felt because of how well Child A was doing academically it was sometimes hard to explain how she worried about other challenges and issues Child A faced especially around her social and emotional wellbeing.

Carer also talked about how she felt unsure of how she was doing raising a CFC child and if there was any services or support groups she could contact to provide some support for her.

Ultimately Carer felt in need of some guidance especially around what to do next to address her concerns and that is ultimately why she felt the need to reach out to the virtual school.

Our journey so far....

After speaking to Carer regarding about what she would find supportive and how to best proceed it was agreed between the virtual school and carer that a EPAC meeting would be arranged to help carer open the narrative with school around her concerns and for her to be able to share some of her concerns.

I as an intermediary contacted school to arrange the EPAC meeting ensuring carer was copied into the request so they had a clear trail of the work being done on their behalf and were involved and supported by the virtual school.

There was some initial hesitation around arranging the meeting but once reassurance had been made that the meeting would be required it was quickly arranged, Carer was contacted by school using the schools messaging platform and an EPAC meeting was put in place.

The EPAC meeting was held and went wonderfully, the school were supportive of the carer and explained some of the social and emotional behaviours were expected due to the age of the child as well discussing some of the positives of Child A with carer.

One of the key points was the discussion around adoption and how Child A was fully aware she was adopted, Carer and School agreed to revisit Child A's Adoption Story work and maybe add to the document to reflect the change in Child A's life up until this point.

What difference has this made?

Carer left the meeting feeling supported and listened too and positive school were understanding of her struggles and challenges.

Carer has left feeling more confident in the education received by Child A at school, more confident the Social and emotional needs will be developed with a greater understanding of the challenges Child A will face.

Immediate next steps

- For a termly EPAC meeting to be put in place hosted by the school to invite the carer.
- For the virtual school to find if there are any support groups for adoptive parents in the area.

PEPS AND PP+

The Personal Education Plan (PEP) is the statutory tool to ensure that everyone is actively prioritising the education of the child/young person, carefully tracking their progress and supporting them to achieve and be aspirational. All children looked after (CFC) have a statutory care plan, which is drawn up and reviewed by the Local Authority who looks after them. The Personal Education Plan is a legal part of the Care Plan, which is a statutory requirement for CFC from the age of 3 years, if in educational provision, up to the age of 18.

The key personnel who should be involved in every PEP meeting are the child, the social worker, the carer and the school's Designated Teacher or Early Years Lead or FE College lead for CFC.

For children of statutory school age the PEP must be held every term. Each VS team member has oversight of particular age groups or SEN and will attend the PEPs for each child at least once in the year and for those who are struggling at school every PEP until progress is being made. This also includes advising, supporting and challenging on inclusive practice in order to maintain children in their schools.

Each team member also has the responsibility of ensuring all PEPs for their children are completed termly and are of a sufficient enough standard.

The VSHT will read every PEP when targets are submitted and if any issues are noted the PEP is referred back to the relevant Designated Teacher for improvement. DTs are asked to remember that the PEP is the VSHT's window on to the child's educational record and the rich discussions that my team describe must be captured in every PEP.

Since September 2015 the Virtual School has used an electronic PEP for children of statutory school age. This ensures that timescales for PEP completion can be monitored more easily than in previous years. The VSGB sets a target of 90% of PEPs to be completed within timescales. It is pleasing to note that we always exceed this target every term. One area for work is ensuring that all professionals who should attend do attend or if unable send a representative in order for their not just to have education staff present.

The VS staff will liaise with Designated Teachers over academic targets within PEPs. The VS will target children in Y6 and Y11 who are within a 40-mile radius to work intensively towards SATS/GCSE English and maths. Where it is impossible to work directly with a child the specialist teachers will advise/liase over suitable targets and interventions funded through PP+. These children are discussed at our half termly Progress Review Intervention Monitoring (PRIM) meetings and their data is closely monitored.

In 2013 the DfE introduced Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) for children looked after and previously looked after children. In doing this, the DfE acknowledged the enduring impact of trauma and loss in the children's lives and the key role of schools in supporting children who have had a difficult start in life. Pupil Premium Plus currently stands at £2410 per child and will be £2530 the following year. The Local Authority who looks after the child is responsible for distributing the PP+ to schools and academies. The Virtual School Head has responsibility and accountability for making sure there are effective arrangements in place for allocating the PP+ to benefit each child looked after by the LA. Each Virtual Head must develop a policy for the funding of PP+ for the LA. The grant must be managed by the Virtual School Head and used to improve outcomes and 'narrow the gap' as identified in the PEP in consultation with the Designated Teacher in the school.

Pupil Premium Plus continues to be welcomed and embraced by schools especially by the Designated Teachers. It has given weight to the Personal Education Plan meetings as it has given the Designated Teachers a resource to use for interventions. Torbay has a policy on PP+ which describes the process. This is updated annually. Very simply if a target is identified through the PEP process which will enable the child to accelerate progress or engage more meaningfully in education it needs to be evidenced through the PEP as a SMART target, written with costs. This then comes to the VSHT for approval.

An area noted last year through the PEP for improvement was the voice of the child. It must be noted that there are Outstanding PEPS where the voice of the child is truly captured within the PEP process and the VS team are working hard to ensure children either attend their PEP meeting at best or at least complete their views prior to the PEP.

The vast majority of targets in the PEPS are SMART which are clear and progressive.

There continues to be 80% of targets being achieved.

Our PEP and Systems Co-ordinator has had a real focus on improving the quality and standard of all PEPs and has had good impact when working with a Designated Teacher to improve practice. She ensures all new DTS have training on the system as well as doing the same for social workers who are new to Torbay.

PEPs continue to be a discussion item at our half termly DT Forums.

It was identified that completed PEPs were not consistently being added to the child's record on LCS. We decided the pragmatic response to ensure consistency in records being recorded on LCS that our PEP and Systems Co-ordinator would take on this task. Our PEP toolkit has been updated to reflect this.

PP+ funded projects

There are a number of projects and interventions which are supported through PP+ such as The Get Gritty Transition Project. This was designed to increase resilience in the child and effect a smooth transition into Y7. It uses the medium of Outdoor Education in order to set challenges which increase

individual resilience and enhance teamwork. This transition project started in the summer term of 2015 and has proved very successful. It takes place after SATS and not only enables young people to have strategies to help them overcome challenges with a positive mind set but also enhances the relationship of the child with the VS staff. We should never underestimate the power of relationship and the team have found this very beneficial when working with the children in Y8 or 9. There are now five activity days in the summer term after SATS. The staff then closely monitor the group during their first weeks in secondary school. Each child who moves from Y6 to Y7 gets a transition pack which includes a rucksack which has an array of stationery and educational resources to support them in their new school.

As with last year it was possible to run *Get Gritty* and it was a pleasure to see this happening again as a group of young people. Two of the three members of staff who supported it this year were new to *Get Gritty*. All those who took part absolutely loved it. All received a *GG* Transition bag which contains stationery items as well as reading resources which are designed to support their emotional wellbeing through the transition into their new school.

All of the Attachment in Schools Training is paid through PP+. The Attachment work commenced in October 2015 and has developed since then. There is a clear understanding that getting all professionals to understand attachment is crucial in order for all of our young people to gain the very best they can from our schools. We have a clear strategy on ensuring that training is ongoing each year and training is now not only offered to schools but also to Early Years settings as well as colleagues from social care. This appears to be showing good results with positive change happening in schools and a greater understanding that a behaviour policy has to include an understanding of the impact of attachment and trauma on the child and the behaviourist model does not work with a child with significant trauma or attachment needs. It should be noted that all but one school in Torbay has undertaken some form of training in attachment. This would be at least one day of training. It is pleasing to note that 30 schools have sent at least one member of staff on the Seven Day Attachment course with 215 training places being taken up.

It should be noted that all Educational Psychologists (EP) undertook the first tranche of Attachment Training and worked alongside school staff but there are now new EPs in post. The EPs ran a half termly attachment support group which stalled during the covid period. However the VS's Attachment Lead Officer undertook support of individual staff members as necessary in recognition of the impact of work with the children with attachment and trauma. It is planned that the EPs will resume their half termly support group in the next academic year. The other point to note is that EP reports now all have a section on the attachment needs of the child. This gives added weight to the VS's desire and belief in attachment and trauma-based work.

A major focus of training has been on attachment. The staff from Torbay schools who have attended see this as the 'missing link' in that for some children they could not make a behaviourist approach work. For example, not giving a child attention when they demonstrate attention seeking behaviour - this is a behaviourist approach. For a child with an insecure attachment, it is vital to give the child attention otherwise it reinforces their sense of insecurity/anxiety/lack of worth.

By the end of the academic year a further 20 staff in schools had commenced their 7 Day Attachment in Schools course.

It was also decided that we would run a course which supported schools and their SLT to move away from Behaviour Policies to Relational Policies. This commenced in the Spring Term and will be completed by the end of January 2024. There are 12 Torbay schools represented on the course with 19 participants.

All of the teachers in the VS have completed the training as well as the Inclusion Officer. All new staff in the VS will undertake the 7 day attachment training and this may also be enhanced by the Trauma Informed Schools 10 day course on supporting mental health in schools. Attachment CPD is always on offer at the DT Forum and bespoke training for schools can be requested. Wherever possible there is agreement for the training to take place as it may well improve the school experience for our young people.

One member of the team is regularly consulted by social workers around attachment and trauma and strategies for working with the children. As a result of the training and skills this member of the team has gained in Torbay over her first two years as Attendance Officer the role changed to one of Inclusion Support Officer. This also sees the post holder being our Attachment Lead in the VS.

We have identified two areas to be of benefit for our young people. One is the undertaking of SALT assessments and getting these completed in the child's timescales. This has meant we have used PP+ funding with schools requesting a SALT assessment which they then commission. Schools have found these very beneficial, and we will continue to support SALT assessments where necessary. These could be the missing link for some young people.

As our attainment for those at the end of Reception is always poor the other area we identified was a School Readiness Project called LEAPlets. Here are the basics! A lot of time in LEAPlets is spent about thinking about children's bodily regulation and development, because it's the foundation for all other development. We talk a lot about three foundation sensorimotor systems; vestibular, proprioceptive and tactile. These are a bit of a mouthful, but really they describe a child's sense of themselves and their bodies, whether their body is as strong as it could be, how they feel when they're running or jumping, and how smooth and well coordinated their movements are. We don't usually spend much time thinking about development and how a child moves from one stage of development to another - we're really used to this just happening without anyone really having to give it any thought. If a baby is well cared for, not too stressed for too much of the time, and able to spend time on their tummy, rolling and then move onto commando crawling and crawling before they start walking, then things generally do just fall into place! From walking, children start jumping, running, climbing and generally getting good at increasingly complex movements. All of these in turn build a good foundation for fine motor skills - so things like cutlery, holding a pencil or threading beads. When children have missed out on those early touch and movement experiences in their first year of life, it's important to do some work to redress it, and this is the work that we do at LEAPlets. You'll get really good at analyzing how your child is moving and noticing changes if you come to LEAPlets. As well as thinking about movement, we'll also think about a child's emotional development. On a psychological level, we know that being under too much stress can be really damaging to brain

development - babies are born with a brain that has phenomenal potential, but how it actually develops is entirely dependent on the relationships and experiences that they have. We know that when babies and young children consistently well looked after, they can struggle to trust other adults or make good relationship. They can constantly be on the lookout for danger and thinking that the bad things that happened are going to happen again. When they're in this state of mind, they're not working with a part of their brain that will let them learn - they're just trying to survive. We spend a lot of time at LEAPlets thinking about this too, how to help children shift from that state of mind where they're primed for survival, to a state of mind that allows them to stay in the moment of an experience and manage not knowing or not being in charge - to be open to relationships - and to have some space in their mind where they might be able to begin to play or to learn.

All the children who took part in the School Readiness Project made progress. It will be important to monitor this progress through their Reception year. Due to the progress seen in this first year the project will run again next academic year.

It is also important to give concrete examples of the attachment work we undertake and its impact. The following have been produced by the VS staff who undertake attachment/relational work with young people:

Storyboard - Yr 3 pupil

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• What was the issue?

- **Relational traumas and losses experienced:-**
 - ❖ House moves - moved home in the summer holiday.
 - ❖ YP has been exposed to drug taking/dealing, criminality, domestic violence, and neglect.
 - ❖ FOC - has supervised contact.
 - ❖ Lives with mother, half sibling and full sibling
- There were elements of emotional harm/neglect.
- Despite an interim care order being issued on 23/2/23, no placement could be found for YP and siblings, so they remain in the home being cared for by MOC, with daily checks twice a day from the Social Care team. YP's presentation at school was such that school felt that there was a risk of harm to others, so a reduced timetable was agreed with VP team before the care order was granted. YP was unable to enter the classroom or have any interaction with the teacher. He was attending school for a few hours in the mornings, but not engaging with learning.

• Our journey so far....

- When the YP came into care, I was tasked with challenging his limited attendance and inclusion in school, whilst also listening to the school's real concern about managing YP's presentation and wanting to avoid exclusions.

- I arranged a meeting to look at YP's education provision. Because of the social care situation, this child was still in MOC's care, with social workers visiting daily. The family were aware that any day the children were going to be removed. Consequently, this meeting was tense and MOC displayed big emotion over her children being removed from the home and YP was hyper-vigilant and fearful of professionals and unknown adults.
- At the initial meeting, school and MOC were resistant to increasing YP's time in school. Because his survival strategies depended on him having total control, his response to things he didn't want, was to smash things, physically hurt people and run. So, he was at risk of permanent exclusion.
- The Educational Psychologist who had been unable to work with YP, also expressed concern over trying to force an increase in his time in school, so I spent time improving my relations with school, MOC so that I could work with their concerns instead of imposing a fulltime timetable. We held face to face meetings, and I regularly checked in with the social worker and Designated Teacher for Cared For Children to talk through incidents, to try to avoid exclusion.
- Through working alongside people, we were able to come to an understanding that it was in YP's best interest to attend school on a full timetable, particularly as there were safeguarding concerns around him being in the home.
- We looked at his needs and agreed a bespoke IEP that would move him to a full timetable. The Virtual School and Social Care funded two days at Inspire and I offered to work with YP at the allotment for an afternoon, as my allotment had provided a school plot for local schools to use, which his school visited every week.
- I have supported Thursday afternoons both at the allotment and in school on rainy days. I observed that YP has a connection with nature and was able to lead the other children in observing wildlife species, share knowledge of nutritional foods and the necessity to protect the ecology of our environment. Being in an outdoor learning environment showed YP to be a very bright child, with an extensive vocabulary and World knowledge, so a full timetable of education was crucial for his progression. It has taken time for him to be more open with me, but he has and shared that he felt like his previous teacher hated him. So, every time he tried to go into class, he felt this hate and knew he wasn't wanted. We were able to explore if what he felt was really how the teacher was feeling and that sometimes even if personalities didn't match well, we had to find ways to work with each other. I shared this with the team around him in school and they worked at making sure he had a thorough transition period with his new teacher and classroom. Since joining his new teacher, YP is attending school full time, going into the classroom and with support accessing lessons.

- What have we done?

- Listen to the child's belief that the class teacher hates him and understand why he felt under threat when asked to go into the classroom.
- To agree a safe working space, where YP can work assisted by a 1:1, that he has a positive relationship with.
- Put in place therapeutic interventions funded by Social Care and the Virtual School.
- Identifying there is trauma due to DV, substance misuse and family's involvement in criminal activity and whilst he remains in the home, there is a need for him to be emotionally supported by working with trusted adults and monitored daily by the social care team.
- Work closely with the designated teacher, 1:1 and pastoral team to identify a team around the child, to monitor and support progress.
- To secure agreement over afternoon interventions, to gradually move to a full timetable.
- I offered to work directly with YP, accompanying a group of children to work on the school allotment, to add another afternoon to his timetable.
- Working with YP and key adults to prepare for the transition to a new class.
-

• What difference has this made?

- The episodes of property being destroyed and physical responses to other people has lessened.
- When I first met YP, he appeared guarded, hyper-vigilant and suspicious of adults. He didn't feel comfortable making eye contact with me, speaking to me and sought separation. Now I am greeted with a smile, he is willing to work alongside me and talks to me more openly. I have also witnessed YP accepting working with other adults more frequently, although still on his terms.
- With interventions in place, YP is now attending school on a full-time timetable.
- Following the success of the transition preparation, YP is now working in the new class and is positive about the new teacher.
- He is presenting as more open and communicative.

• Areas for further action

- Continued collaboration between home, school, social worker, and Virtual School to ensure slow progress continues.
- The Educational Psychologist will attempt to work with YP now that there is a stable period in his environment and his fear of professionals is not so acute.
- Share best practice to raise awareness for what has worked well and not so well.
- Virtual School to provide attachment training to the whole school.
- Deepen new adult relationships, to help YP experience safe, trustworthy adult relationships.
- Next term to prepare plans to reduce interventions to enable YP to access a more academic full timetable.
- For class teacher to attempt to obtain some academic data for YP.

• Immediate next steps

- Secure funding to enable the therapeutic intervention to continue.
- The Educational Psychologist to meet with YP.

What was the issue?

Relational traumas and losses experienced:-

- ❖ More than 10 social worker changes.
- ❖ Has been in care half his life in more than 13 placements.
- ❖ Had a serious head injury in a car accident.
- ❖ YP has been exposed to addiction and neglect.
- ❖ MOC - has supervised contact.
- ❖ FOC - has never had contact.
- ❖ Lives with foster carers, two other foster children.

There are elements of emotional harm and neglect.

YP came into care in 2018, aged 2 years.

Awaiting long term matching for present carers.

Our journey so far....

At the PEP meeting, it became apparent that YP's presentation had escalated to the point that carers and school were struggling to meet their needs.

The Virtual School funded weekly Art Therapy sessions, as an SEMH intervention.

However, things came to a head when on a particularly difficult evening, the carers communicated that they may not be able to continue with the placement. There followed a suspension from school due to the YP hitting a member of staff with a piece of wood and throwing a glass vase in the Headteacher's office.

This period was the same time of year that the YP had had their car accident, so we had discussion around memory of the body and how the trauma of this event may be surfacing.

We held a meeting and the Headteacher expressed concerns over keeping staff, children and YP safe when their presentation was so explosive. A great deal of support had been put into place including a 1:1 funded by the school, whilst waiting for the outcome of an RSA. Before considering actions going forward, I carried out an observation of YP in a structured lesson. I was also able to see how much support the school had put in place and the strong commitment from staff to make the YP feel valued.

The observation showed me that this YP was overwhelmed by the classroom environment and

expectation of the school day. They were unable to: maintain focus for more than a few minutes, sit in a chair for enough time to complete a task, communicate without shouting and interrupting the teacher. In short, they were unable to regulate and thrive in a classroom environment at this time. When allowed outside for a sensory break, I observed that they were more relaxed and freer with their movements - physically moving and digging seemed to calm them and they were able to engage with conversation, follow instruction and cooperate with peers better.

The YP was eager to engage with me and show me what they were doing. They were curious and bright, so I was able to talk about the things they liked and felt comfortable with.

Seeing how different their demeanour was outside gave me the idea of finding an outdoors intervention. I have worked with a company that work with YP in forest, moorland and beach settings to build self-esteem, foster independence and explore emotional and mental health issues. I discussed this provision with school and Carers, who were initially reluctant. They viewed putting in such an intervention as rewarding poor behaviour but agreed to give it a chance. As Monday was identified as a particularly difficult day for the YP and consequently staff, it was agreed that the intervention would take place on a Monday afternoon. I arranged a visit to the school to introduce the practitioner to the YP. The meeting started with the YP on a bean bag, under a blanket, completely closed to talking to us. I slowly coaxed the YP to where we were sitting by talking about all the things that they had in common with the practitioner and when they were asked if they wanted to see the bicycle that the practitioner had cycled to school on a connection was made. By the end of the meeting the YP was on board and excited about trying the sessions.

I had feedback from each session, which was positive. The YP was engaged, cooperating and even shared a book in the forest, something they avoided doing at home and school. However, school and carers were not fully on board with the intervention because they felt it was a treat and the YP was so excitable on Monday mornings. I spent time visiting the carer and talking through how we needed to view the intervention positively keeping the status quo was not helpful to addressing the YP's needs. The YP had a lack of male role models in their lives, so seeing how positive the experience was for the YP and the good relationship they were building with the male practitioner slowly changed the carer's point of view. I spoke to both school and carer and suggested we all try celebrating the excitement the YP was feeling on

Monday mornings and how important it was that staff recognise that the intervention was not a treat but meeting a need.

The carers are now fully on board and supportive of the intervention.

I began working with the YP on Thursday afternoons, looking at emotions, reactions and regulation using music. The carer had mentioned that the YP liked singing and had a ukelele, so I based my sessions around a story that takes an emotional journey and taught the songs on the ukelele.

Because the YP has a very short attention span I also supplemented the music with draw and talk activities and introduced some soft toys and puppets, each one representing an emotion, which the YP responded very well to. Using these characters, I was able to mirror situations that had happened and explore how the YP viewed them and their actions.

Through this work, the YP was able to share the anxiety and fear they sometimes felt in school and their feelings of toxic shame about what they described as 'being bad'. Using the soft toys, I was able to explore what 'being bad' really was - sometimes making

wrong choices/misunderstanding/making mistakes and look at different strategies to manage the strong feelings that arose. From the stories the YP told, I understood that what looked like extreme anger, aggression and disruption came from a place of fear and the absolute need to run from that fear. I was able to share with carers and school what it was like for the YP when adults 'came for him' and he didn't have anywhere safe to run to. School have responded by requesting Virtual School funding to buy a wooden hut that will be turned into a safe space to run to.

Through working alongside the carer and YP's 1:1 to identify the YP's attachment type, we looked at appropriate responses and interventions, that may be beneficial. Together the YP and I designed a sensory box, which I have made. I shared each stage of painting, adding embellishments through photos, which kept the connection between us in between sessions.

At the CFC review, it was found that due to many changes of social worker, none of the therapeutic interventions suggested by the Clinical Psychologist assessment had been followed up. I have worked alongside the current social worker, school and carers to inform a multi-disciplinary assessment to identify how best to support this YP to progress to the best of their ability, thrive and build positive relationships. Throughout the period that we have had the forest and music intervention in place, things have become calmer in school. The YP recently attended their first Celebration of Achievement Awards, which can be loud and busy

and they managed to attend the whole event, which the carers were so surprised and thankful for.

What have we done?

- Listen to and understand what the YP is experiencing when they are dysregulating.
- To support staff and carers to understand how meeting a YP's need is not the same as rewarding bad behaviour.
- Put in place therapeutic interventions funded by the Virtual School.
- Identifying there is trauma due to neglect, multiple rejections, and substance abuse there is a need for YP to be emotionally supported by working with trusted adults in a trauma/attachment informed way.
- Work closely with the designated teacher, 1:1 and pastoral team to identify a team around the child, to monitor and support progress.
- To secure agreement over afternoon interventions.
- Working with key adults to prepare for the transition to a new class.
- Agreed to provide whole school attachment training.

What difference has this made?

- The episodes of property being destroyed and physical responses to other people has lessened.
- The staff working with YP have another point of view to consider regarding presentation.
- Carers are more understanding of how behaviour is communication.
- He is presenting as more open and calmer.
- YP has been given an opportunity to explore safe connections with trusted adults.

Areas for further action

- Continued collaboration between home, school, social worker, and Virtual School to ensure slow progress continues.
- Recommendations from multi-disciplinary assessment to be actioned.
- Share best practice to raise awareness for what has worked well and not so well.
- Virtual School to provide attachment training to the whole school.
- Deepen new adult relationships, to help YP experience safe, trustworthy adult relationships.
- For class teacher to attempt to obtain some academic data for YP

Immediate next steps

- Secure funding to enable the therapeutic intervention to continue.
- To integrate YP into the Virtual School Music Group.

Other work:

Through the work the interventions use:

PROTECT:

- ✚ helping the child to feel safe enough to share feelings, thoughts and develop their own capacity for help-seeking with other trusted adults.
- ✚ Help the child to feel understood,
- ✚ Use of PACE.

RELATE:

- ✚ Through PACE enable the child to feel secure to access their learning.

REGULATE:

- ✚ Affect attunement and develop empathy.
- ✚ Change dysregulation with reasoning and communication.

REFLECT:

- ✚ Help the child make sense of what is happening and why it is happening.
- ✚ Address negative self-referencing 'I am bad so people will leave me'.

Storyboard - Yr 8 pupil

CONFIDENTIAL

What was the issue?

Relational traumas and losses experienced:-

- House moves - 5 changes of placement since coming into the care of the LA in 2013
- During the period of time leading up to the child being taken into care there was 1 further relationship identified with moc. During this period there were episodes of DV and neglect.
- FOC - left when the young person was approx. 1 years old
- 3 other siblings; separated from two of the siblings, on assessments being completed.

There were elements of emotional and physical harm/neglect.

MOC - had been cared for from the age of 12.

Foster carers are supportive of their child and has been a constant support since 2019. There have been concerns raised by foster carer as to the young person's mental health and presentation. The presentations described by the carer had not been seen at school.

Presentation at home: mental health and anxiety; repetitive speech; processing issues

Presentation at school: happy young person with mix of friends; often will act like the 'class clown'.

Sense of humour.

Our journey so far....

I have worked alongside the Secondary School to understand the young person and how best to support him given the difference of behaviours seen between school and home. The young person had developed a positive relationship with the school counsellor; however, this had ended abruptly

with the school counsellor being away from school and not returning. Professional difference between home and school and concerns raised.

- EP assessment arranged and follow-up meeting to discuss the outcome of the report.
- SEND review meeting.
- SALT assessment completed to have a better understanding of the young person's needs - The report showed difficulties and deficit with receptive and expressive language; unable to read social situations and the ability to mask the difficulties being experienced through the ability to repeat back simple spoken sentences without having to understand them.
- Direct work in trauma and Mental-Health informed practice/Theraplay
- Interventions to allow the child to be in the moment; have elements of surprise in a safe and contained space; develop trust; rich relational experiences.
- 1:1 intervention around Maths. Building on relationship with the tutor and informing tutor of working with the young person in a trauma informed way
- Communication with key professionals /school staff provide reflective space.
- Colleague within the VS has completed a lesson observation and feedback provided to the Designated Teacher and to inform the next PEP / carer.

It has been our aim from initiating the work to offer a transparent approach to development, and share information as progress is made to all involved.

What have we done?

- To support the yp and ensure their needs are met through direct and indirect work
- Interventions that support the young person with their learning
- Identifying there is developmental trauma and through the work being completed start to encourage exercises to support the vestibular, proprioceptive, and tactile sensorimotor skills. Developing core strength and awareness of space and body as well as stamina
- Work closely with the designated teacher to inform of continued support needed.
- Meet and greet.
- Regular check-ins

What difference has this made?

- The child has built trust with their tutor and going from dependency to interdependency.
- The child is able to follow direction from school staff and engages well with the direct work.
- Increased awareness of feelings and emotions alongside strategies to help them settle to learn

Areas for further action

- Continued support for the child to become more dependant learner.
- A new counsellor is due to start at the school. The need to develop a trusting relationship with this key adult.
- Share best practice to raise awareness for what has worked well and not so well.
- Continued support for staff, as required, as well as carers
- Develop further peer relationships.

Immediate next steps

- Review PEP targets
- Social worker to make a referral to the Cared for Nurse Team re: assessments.

Other work:

Through the work the interventions use:

PROTECT:

- helping the child to feel safe enough to share feelings, thoughts and develop their own capacity for help-seeking with other trusted adults.
- Help the child to feel understood,
- Stay socially engaged and use of PACE.

RELATE:

- Cross the transaction
- Attachment play
- Through PACE enable the child to optimally activate neurochemicals opioids/oxytocin etc., (CARE system)

REGULATE:

- Affect labelling
- Affect attunement
- Change emotion with emotion.

REFLECT:

- Help the child make sense of what is happening and why it is happening
- Talk about 'protective factors'
- Address negative self-referencing 'it's my fault'.

The teachers and inclusion and achievement officers in the VS are responsible for ensuring that the young people who are allocated to them also achieve their academic potential. The teachers are the first line of communication between the Designated Teachers who will have the attainment data and details of interventions. There is a real push for each school to ensure interventions are in place for English and maths in Y11 and reading and maths in Y6. On occasions they will work 1:1 with children where other interventions have not been successful. This will usually see tuition being in place until the final examination in that subject has been taken.

The final account for PP+ (financial year to March 2023) follows:

Pupil Premium Expenditure 2022 - 2023

INCOME		EXPENDITURE	
DfE Grant	£586,410	Summer PP+ Targets	£119,472.70
Contribution - Recovery premium	£19638.75	Autumn PP+ Targets	£119340.78

	Spring PP+ Targets	£134,952.78
	Salary costs	£67323
	Direct spend via Business Admin	£152,332.99
	AP Provision for 1 child	£4526.50
	School Project Funding	£8100
TOTAL:	£606,048.75	TOTAL: £606,048.75

It is important to note that PP+ is used to fund three posts in the VS. These three posts are vital to the running of the school. The first is our PEP and Systems Co-ordinator and without this post I believe our PEP completion rate would fall. Alicja Powell is our PEP CO-ordinator and the first person Social Workers and DTs contact for training, advice or trouble shooting support. Our second is the KS4 Transitions Officer. Laila Rehman is the post holder, and this post was created to oversee our post 16 cohort. Finally, our Admin Officer, which is a part-time post, is funded through PP+. Amy Jones is the post holder and undertakes work just like a BSO in a school. So completing orders for resources, keeping a budget sheet of annual spending, taking minutes at the Team Meetings and most vitally acting as the clerk to the Virtual School Governing Body.

Please note PP+ runs in the financial year and Recovery Premium and School Led Tutoring runs through the Academic Year.

For this academic year Recovery Premium totalled £33,527 and School Led Funding £33,111.76. This spend is reported directly to the DfE in September and provides 60% of the cost of tutoring. PP+ is used to provide the top up.

Support Work

As well as our work on attachment the team in the Virtual School act as a champion for each child and will support the child and their school to navigate barriers to learning. All the team members embrace this role and enjoy the opportunity to both support and challenge in order for our children to reach their full potential.

There are also three extra curricular clubs which operate throughout the year.

On a Monday at 4pm - Get Remixed with Louise Kilshaw and Becky Somers

On a Tuesday at 4pm - Get Musical with Fiona Fenton and Katie Cavanna

On a Wednesday at 4pm - Get Bowling with Tracey Powell and Laila Rehman

Extended Duties

As reported in last year's report this grant and extension to the duties of the VS was in place from September 2021. As we were notified in June 2021 of this, we were not able to create roles and the recruit for September. In January 2022 two members of staff commenced this work - Katie Cavanna and Lyndsey Pengelly.

'The Department for Education extended the role of the Virtual School, providing additional funding to better support children and young people with social workers to make educational progress, maintaining a culture of high aspirations and raising standards. The DfE sees this as an opportunity to enhance the partnerships between education settings and local authorities. The expectation is that the Virtual School will work with the wider community to help better understand and address the disadvantages these young people can experience.

The DfE reports that children and young people with a social worker are around 3 times more likely to be persistently absent from school, and between 2 and 4 times more likely to be permanently excluded from school than their peers. This group are also more than 10 times likely to attend state-funded alternative provision settings than all other pupils. Attendance in an educational setting is vital for a young person to make educational progress, for their wellbeing, and for their wider development. Attendance is also a protective factor, offering a safe space and being visible to, as well as having access to, supportive adults and professionals.

There are a number of barriers to engagement and learning for this cohort of students. This may include family barriers, lack of access to advice and guidance, unsuitable education pathways, confidence issues, mental health, disabilities, health conditions, and social expectations. The Covid pandemic has further increased barriers to attendance and engagement. It is likely that some of young people have increased mental health and wellbeing needs, will have been at increased risk whilst having to spend more time at home, will have had routines disrupted, feeling more vulnerable.

The DfE has agreed to continue to fund this role for the academic year of 2022/23.

Aim of Extended Duties

Our aim is to strengthen the partnership between education settings and the Local Authority through collaborative work, identifying and addressing the needs of our children and young people with a social worker to ensure that they have access to support that will ensure they make educational progress. We want to be able to offer advice and support to education providers so that our children and young people can make progress. This should build on the work undertaken by the VS for CFC and highlight the same principles should be in place for children with a SW as for CFC.

We look to build relationships with Headteachers, Governors, Designated Teachers, SENDCOs and Designated Safeguarding Leads, and bring together the Virtual School resource, schools, and Children's Services to focus on promoting educational outcomes for this group of children and young people.

We want to promote educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children with a social worker are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement at school or college.

Action Taken

We have been in post since January 2022. We have had a very busy year thus far and so have listed the highlights from the commencement of our posts until we moved to the Vulnerable Pupils Team.

- Analysing CiN and CP attendance data available to us at the end of each half term and comparing to previous data. We have also manually cross-referenced information harvested from different databases, highlighted anomalies and shared our finding with colleagues in Children's Services so further investigation can be undertaken.
- Building relationships with DSLs, including attending and contributing to DSL forums, liaising with DSLs when colleagues in Children's Services have questions, and using any data available to instigate conversations. We have also investigated further training required and liaised with the Learning Academy to provide this.
- Attended a range of meetings within Children's Services that helped us to better understand how teams work together and how our role might support moving forward. This included a PRP meeting, SEND panel and SEND Team meeting.
- Building relationships with Extended Duties colleagues from other Local Authorities, sharing good practice, resources, planning and outcomes.
- Met with Sarah James of TESS to share information gathered from schools and to better understand how TESS supports schools, then promoting TESS, reminding DSLs to use the service if they buy into it and encouraging others to consider buying into the service.
- Analysing the attendance records at training events and forums, focussing on which schools engage with services, and where we need to work harder to promote relationships between schools and services. We have then advised colleagues on how to improve engagement.
- We have developed work instigated by colleagues in Children's Services, creating a directory of local and national contacts for a range of needs that the young people and their families might have. This has been shared with colleagues and with school DSLs.

- The creation of a handout for schools to adapt and use, with key contacts for organisations their young people and families might need.
- Met with Shaun Evans and the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) and LADO Team. One of the IROs has become a link member of staff, meeting with us more regularly to discuss individual pupil attendance and engagement concerns.
- Met with social worker Team Managers to start building links, and we have created an information and Q&A sheet for social workers to refer to when considering a young person's education and the positive impact attendance can have on an individual.
- Met with Lucinda Wills of the Learning Academy to design further training opportunities for DSLs, DTs and school SLT.
- Supported children with a social worker in their transition from Year 6 into Year 7, and building links between schools. We have been able to organise additional school visits, supply some children with resources, and subsidise some places at summer school.
- Promoted and visited HAF and community groups, building relationships with stakeholders and better understand what is available for our children and young people.
- Attended training and seminars to enhance our understanding of adverse childhood experiences, and how our role can best support our children and young people.
- Offered advice to both schools and social workers regarding supporting individual children and young people in our cohort.
- Presented to other service teams within Children's Services about our roles and how we can work collaboratively to raise the profile of education and attendance for our children and young people.
- Taking on an enhanced overview of the education of children and young people with a social worker, working with colleagues in Children's Services to challenge and support schools in raising aspirations, attendance, and engagement with our young people. This is to be done by monitoring attendance, academic outcomes, liaising with schools, IROs and social workers, and attending meetings as appropriate so that we can advise, share resources, or signpost support.
- Updating resources to share with schools and services on a regular basis so that the DSLs, DTs, and school SLT have relevant materials to best support their pupils.
- Work with IROs, attending regular forums and meetings where we can discuss individuals and plan support, also building strong links between IROs and the Virtual School. The IROs will also be invited to attend DSL and DT training and forums if relevant to their role.
- Continue to develop strategies and organising events with colleagues in Children's Services and schools for transition points in education.
- Promoting, attending, and offering support at DSL, DT and SLT forums, ensuring that schools are fully aware of the support available to them.
- Promoting and contributing to training opportunities for DSLs, DTs and SLT through the Learning Academy and the Teaching School Alliance. This is to include attendance forums, attachment training, and training for school governors.
- Completion of both the 7-day Touchbase Attachment Lead qualification and the TISUK Diploma in Trauma and Mental Health Informed Schools (Practitioner Status) so that we are ensuring that we match the skills, knowledge and understanding of the Virtual School Team.
- Explore how we capture the voice of the child/young person and the voice of the families being supported.

- Encourage and explore ways to support school teams to share information amongst themselves and use data to inform and share best practice, including pupil lists, training opportunities, and resources.
- Improving school attendance, and we see ourselves as being part of the support network for both Children's Services and the schools in Torbay in finding ways of responding to this document positively and making those changes for our children and young people.

Cared For Children Celebrations

This academic year the task of organising the CFC Award Ceremony was delivered effectively by the Virtual School and I am delighted to say that this was the first in person event since the pandemic. It ran very much in line with how they had been prior to the pandemic.

Our keynote speaker continued in pattern of having a care experienced adult speak to our young people. This year it was Lemn Sissay. Lemn spoke with passion and sadness about his journey through care and then his journey into becoming an acclaimed author, poet and broadcaster. He read some of his poetry which linked to his care experience. This was very well received by all at this event on 25 November.

Here are the names of the awards:

Acts of Kindness

Attainment

Attendance

Community Champion

Creative Genius

Growth Mindset

Musical Maestro

Overcoming Obstacles

Personal Achievement

Perseverance

Progress Award

Sporting Prowess

Triple A

For each award, bar the Triple A which is primarily aimed at those completing their Y11, there was a primary aged winner and a secondary aged winner. The winners receive a trophy and book and Amazon voucher. All nominated children receive a book voucher and Amazon voucher.

Following the event it was recommended that a group of young people review and then make recommendations for the following year.

Here are Tracey Powell's words which were shared back in May. It was arranged to take 11 young people for pizza during an evening, supported by Sophie de Souza, Participation Officer and Mary Nairn, Disability Team Manager.

We met at a local hotel for Pizza. The young people ranged from 7 years of age - 16. They were delightful and quickly formed new friendships with each other as well as engaging with the adults. They shared their views willingly. One young person did ask if we could get Kevin Hart (Hollywood Actor) to the Awards! I did explain our budget would not allow for the private jet he would need.

The children expressed that they enjoyed the Awards, as they were. They liked the events following the Awards. Two young people shared that they did not like going up on stage, but loved hearing their name being mentioned, as well as the goody bag and certificate they received. One younger member of the group had found the speaker 'boring' but thought he was funny. One asked for more ice-cream.

Overall, they gave us good feedback and would if gave Sophie an opportunity to meet our young people in a very informal setting. Sophie really enjoyed the evening with the young people.

Celebration of Awards has been booked for Friday 20th October 2023 at the RICC

The Under 7s Celebration (Children's Tea Party) did take place on the afternoon of 22 June and was identical to previous events in that it was held in a local hotel but with a different children's entertainer from previous events along with food with party bags on leaving.

Priorities

- To focus on literacy in all age groups
- To focus on English and Maths outcomes at KS4
- Strengthen the work with the Early Years Team in order to improve outcomes in the EYFS and run a further School Readiness Project
- Review impact of first School Readiness Project in July 2023
- To continue the focus of the PRIM (progress, review, intervention meetings) on Y6 and 11 and Y5 and Y10
- To improve progress in primary writing and seek support from high performing schools
- To continue to build on the improvement in the quality of Personal Education Plans to bring consistently high-quality PEPS
- Work in partnership with colleagues in SC and schools to increase the completion and effectiveness of the SDQ through the PEP process
- To develop the child's voice within the VS
- To continue the focus and training on attachment in schools and ensure all relevant staff in schools and the LA have an opportunity to increase their knowledge
- To continue to strengthen the relationship between the VS staff and fostering families in order to ensure all fostering families have high educational aspirations for all our CFC.
- Ensure all fostering families have up to date knowledge of the changes within the curriculum at all key stages, life without levels, progress 8 and attainment 8, as well as understanding

their role in PEPs, PP+ interventions and the support they provide for children placed in their care

- To undertake the training for CFC Governors in schools in Torbay annually
- To continue to monitor suspensions and identify any impact of attachment and trauma informed practice on reducing suspensions
- To review each suspension in terms of the exclusion protocol implemented for all exclusions for children in Torbay schools
- To explore whether speech and language assessments should be prioritised for children and young people as they can have a positive impact for children and young people with attachment needs.
- Post 16 PP+ funding needs to be confirmed and a decision made on how it is used to the benefit of all our post 16 cohort no matter where they live.

Conclusions

A child needs to feel safe and secure in school and this also demonstrates to them their worth. This then optimises their belief in themselves and as the Rees Report states the young person's agency is crucial in achieving better outcomes. Indeed, without their desire to do well, no intervention will ameliorate their disadvantage.

From this report there are clear examples of the impact of our work on individual CFC but also on whole school change. As HT I am incredibly proud of the work of my team and their desire to ensure every child has a positive and successful journey through school into their adult life.

There is call for celebration with the Reading results at KS2. In the previous academic year Torbay was placed 12th out of all Virtual Schools for its Reading outcomes as recorded by the LAIT (local authority interactive tool). This is based on a result of 90% achieving this in July 2023 will see Torbay VS amongst the best, if not the best VS in Reading. A clear indication of our commitment to literacy.

There will always be room for improvement in our attainment and whilst our children may not achieve ARE in normal timescales their progress towards this is demonstrated within their PEPS. Many achieve educational milestones later than their peers and we should remember this but not use it as an excuse for under performance. Many of our Cared For Children have had disrupted experiences of school and whilst some are able to catch up others take longer to complete that journey. We must celebrate the milestones they achieve and also recognise that with good preparation for adult life they will achieve happy and successful lives.

It is clear that the schools in Torbay have a positive partnership and commitment to the Virtual School and I would like to thank Head teachers and Principals of our schools for their continued support.

The impact of the Virtual School's Governing Body can also be seen through their work. I appreciate the support and challenge of the members of the VSGB and the knowledge and skills they bring to our meetings.

It is testament to the positive impact of Virtual Schools that the Department of Education keeps extending its remit.

The Virtual School team consists of highly competent professionals with a passion to ensure our cared for children achieve the very best they can. They demonstrate on a daily basis their knowledge and understanding of the young people and have excellent links with their social care colleagues.

There are good systems in place to track and monitor our children. The VS knows its children and young people very well. It works with the child, with the carer, with the school and demonstrates doing 'with' rather than to. OFSTED wrote in its June 2018 report that effective oversight and scrutiny is conducted by the VS. This was replicated in the ILACS inspection of 2022. In the LGA's Peer Review the VS was acknowledged for the positive impact it has had with the attachment work both within the LA and in its schools.

The Virtual School will make difficult decisions when schools are clearly not the best settings for our children or resist school moves. Only the best is good enough for our children and young people.

The Virtual School offers training to a variety of professionals on educational attainment and inclusion. It also demonstrates the importance of CPD for its own staff by ensuring that team members are able to take advantage of training opportunities identified through appraisal.

The children with SEN have the benefit of oversight by the VS's SENCO as well as the SENCO in their own school. This will need to be reviewed to look at the impact of this.

Individual team members understand they all have a role to play in enabling our young people to succeed and ensure the VS is considered a Good if not Outstanding VS.

We continue to ensure that all Personal Education Plans are rated 'Good' on every occasion and that children are encouraged to participate in a meaningful way in their PEP.













It has been a great privilege to lead the VS through from its inception to what it is now in its thirteenth year. We have had very little staff change in those 13 years. I think that is testament to the aims and objectives of the VS and the way it has been managed. I would like to thank present and past members of the VSGB. I have felt both supported and encouraged to reflect on the outcomes for our cared for children.

I would like to thank each and every member of the VS over the last 13 years for all of the commitment they have shown to the young people and the way they have invested in the team. They have not been trying to be better than others but understand the power of a team which works to everybody's strengths. As a leader you cannot demand respect from your team members or demand excellence in their work. You have to prove that you truly are invested in them and therefore command respect from them. I believe I have created a team that feels valued and respected. A team that feels empowered and invested in. A team that can then use that as a model on how they

work with young people. Relationships matter and without positive relationships it is almost impossible to succeed in our work.

OUTCOMES 2023

Performance indicator	T R E N D	2023 TORBAY cared for children %	2022 Torbay cared for children %	2023 National cared for children %	2023 TORBAY all pupils %	RAG Based Torbay CFC v national CFC
		*				
EYFS % reached GLD	↓	11.1% (1)	33% (2)	41%	63.5%	R
KS1 % Reached at least expected standard - Reading	↓	33.3% (2)	50% (3)	46%	65.1%	R
KS1 % Reached at least expected standard - Writing	↓	33.3% (2)	50% (3)	35%	56.1%	R
KS1 % Reached at least expected standard - Maths	↓	33.3% (2)	50% (3)	46%	67.9%	R
KS1 % Reached at least expected standard - Reading, writing and maths	↓	33.3% (2)	50% (3)	NA	52.5%	R
KS2 % Reached at least expected standard - Reading	↑	90% (9)	53.8% (7)	54%	73.4%	G
KS2 % Reached at least expected standard - Writing	↑	70% (7)	38.4% (5)	47%	68.7%	G
KS2 % Reached at least expected standard - Maths	↑	60% (6)	53.8% (7)	50%	71.8%	G
KS2 % Reached at least expected standard - Reading, Writing and maths	↑	60% (6)	38.4% (5)	36%	57.6%	G
KS4 % gaining a strong pass in both English and maths at Grade 5+	↑	16.6% (4)	8.7% (2)	NA	Not available	A
KS4 % gaining a pass in both English and maths at Grade 4+	↑	25% (6)	13.1% (3)	12%	49%	G
KS4 % gaining a Grade 5+ in English	↑	16.6% (4)	8.7% (2)	NA	Not available	G
KS4 % gaining at least a Grade 4 in English	↑	33.2% (8)	26% (6)	NA	Not available	G
KS4 % gaining a Grade 5+ in maths	↑	16.6% (4)	8.7% (2)	NA	Not available	G
KS4 % gaining at least a Grade 4 in maths	↑	25% (6)	17.4% (4)	NA	Not available	G
Y1 - 11 attendance	↑	92%	90.54%	92.2% (2022)	88.65%	A

% receiving at least one fixed term exclusion (continuous care group)	 	17% (29)	14%	9.8% (2021)	4.7% (902)	
% receiving a permanent exclusion	 	0%	0	0.03% (2021)	0.3% (58)	
KS5 (Y13) % gaining L3 qualifications		2.8%	38.4%	Not available	Not available	
KS5 (Y13) % gaining L2 qualifications		22.4%	15.4%	Not available	Not available	
KS5 (Y13) % gaining L1 qualifications		2.8%	7.7%	Not available	Not available	
Total 18 - 24 year old care leavers participating in Higher Education		requested	Not on LAIT so this means less than 5 yp		Not available	

Appendix 2: Local Authorities with Torbay CFC 2022-23

Blaenau Gwent

London Borough of Richmond

Wakefield

Hampshire

Cornwall

Northamptonshire

Devon

Monmouthshire

Surrey

Somerset

Plymouth

Norfolk

Kent

Angus

Newport (Wales)

West Sussex

Gloucestershire

Liverpool

Lancashire

London Borough of Walthamstow

Bath and North-East Somerset (BANES)

Oxfordshire

Bury

Powys

Cambridgeshire

Staffordshire

Sandwell

Bedfordshire

East Sussex

The PEP Toolkit

High Quality Personal Education Planning (PEP) Guidance for Schools, Settings and Social Workers

Torbay Virtual School Website:

- <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/virtual-school/>
- Supporting the education of cared for children from ages 0 – 18 years

WHAT IS A PEP?

- The Personal Education Plan (PEP) is a **statutory** document for Cared for Children (CFC).

- The PEP is an **evolving record** of what needs to happen for Cared for Children to enable them to make accelerated **progress** and fulfil their full **potential**. In Torbay, the PEP for CFC in Early Years provision to Year 13 is completed via the Torbay electronic PEP (e-PEP) system. This is hosted by e-Gov Digital and can be accessed by following the link www.egov.uk.com. They document the education journey for children cared for by the LA.
- The e-PEP should act as a mechanism to hold all stakeholders to account for the aspirational educational outcome for Cared for Children through targeted planning.
- The e-PEP ensures that the key people in relation to the education of a cared for child meet, discuss, plan and regularly review:
 1. Achievements, progress, and strengths
 2. Needs and barriers to learning.
 3. Appropriate and aspirational outcomes
 4. Provision and interventions to meet the outcomes.
 5. Additional funding that may be needed through Pupil Premium Plus (if eligible)

For queries regarding e-PEP please contact:

tvb@torbay.gov.uk

PEP Coordinator Alicja Powell – alicja.powell@torbay.gov.uk

Telephone: 01803 208574 Mobile 07823847691

PEP RESPONSIBILITIES

PEP Responsibilities

- Partnership between the social worker, the foster carer and the designated teacher is crucial to the pupil thriving and achieving. The PEP is the joint responsibility of the Local Authority (Corporate Parents) and the school.

- **The Social Worker** is responsible for the Care Plan, made before the pupil becomes cared for; the PEP is legally an integral part of this plan. The social worker needs to ensure that the designated teacher is informed in advance of other meetings about the pupil, particularly CFC Reviews/Pathway Plan which are led by the **Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)**, however the school should not be expected to attend all these meetings.

- The social worker initiates the PEP within 10 days of a child becoming cared for or moving to a new school. A meeting is arranged accordingly. It should be noted that a version of it should have been developed and available for the first statutory review meeting of the care plan (28 days after entry to care or accommodation).

- If for any reason the pupil is not in educational provision, the social worker should still call a PEP meeting. A member of the Virtual School (VS) team will take the role of the DT.

- **The Designated Teacher (DT)** has a statutory role and leads on how the PEP is used to monitor and support the pupil's progress towards education targets. They should see the PEP as a useful and living document and be familiar with the statutory guidance on their role. See DfE Guidance for Designated Teacher for Cared For Children and Previously Cared for Children

- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The_designated_teacher_for_looked-after_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf

- The DT, particularly if they are part of the Senior Leadership team, will be the most effective person to lead the PEP

- process and have an overview of pupil premium spending. In an Early years setting, this may be a designated person.
-
- The DT should arrange and chair all PEP meetings after the first. If the DT delegates the PEP process, the PEP meeting should be attended and written up by a qualified educational professional reporting to the DT. It should be **quality assured and approved by the DT**. The person leading the PEP should have DT training with the VS.
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- All PEPs are also statutorily required to be **quality assured by a senior member of the Virtual School**. *Criteria and Guidance for Quality Assurance of PEPS*.
- The DT is required to report at least once a year to their **Governing Body (Voluntary Committee)** on the progress of Cared for Children. This includes reporting on their own training, any planning or process issues arising from the PEP and on the impact of the pupil premium on the student's progress.
- Schools and settings have a responsibility to ensure that they pass on information to each other when students move. It is an expectation that by the PEP meeting, the receiving school will be in possession of the pupil's file.
- DTs should endeavour to ensure that those responsible for the co-ordination of Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) can provide reports or attend the meetings of those in year 7 upwards.

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KEY DATES FOR PEP COMPLETION 2022 - 2023

THE PEP GUIDANCE

Before the Meeting

1. Everyone has confirmed attendance.
2. Social Worker has completed Section A and marked completed on the PEP.
3. Pupil voice collected, DT and pupil have had discussion about the meeting e.g., who will be there, possible outcomes.
4. Attendance, progress, and attainment data is to hand and has been completed on the e-PEP. Information can be gathered from teachers.
5. **Other key documents** e.g., recent reports, attendance, inclusion support plans, SEN documentation, provision mapping/individual tracking documents are available as needed.
6. SEN and other relevant documentation can be attached to the e-PEP.

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The Meeting

Welcome and introductions.

Decide who will chair (the DT), take notes, and agree the timescale for the length of the meeting. Complete an attendance sheet with contact details if necessary.

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Social Worker provides an overview.

How is the child's wellbeing? Have any issues been raised about the home or school? Are there any concerns to be addressed?

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Educational achievements and aspirations

Start with the pupil voice and carer voice – What is going well? What are the challenges? What are the needs and aspirations of the pupil and carers and/or parents? School view – what is going well? Where is support offered and/or needed?

-

Targets and actions

Review targets from previous PEP – Have they been achieved? If not, provide feedback on why this might be. Agree targets based on the previous conversation. Targets should be **specific to the pupil** and expressed from a personal perspective, not a service one. They should support **high aspirations** and set **high expectations** and build on what is working well and address what is not working well. Make targets SMART with a clear purpose. Identify actions that will support the achievement of the targets (interventions, provision etc)

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Next meeting

Set the date and time.

Think about the best time for the meeting – do not take pupils out of lessons unless necessary and talk to them about how best to secure their input. Attendance at the meeting is a decision that should be made by those people who best know them and their wishes. There is no 'must' and it should be 'as appropriate.'

The PEP should record **actions and responsibilities**. The PEP process is a **cycle of consultation, planning and review** designed to ensure that the corporate parent is collectively working to ensure that the pupil can maximise their potential. The process should:

- Be informed by the best information available.
- Contribute to stability for the pupil.
- Signal additional and/or special needs.
- Establish short term clear goals and prepare for the next stage of learning and provision.
- Record progress and achievement
- Ensure access to services and support.
- Make best value use of resources such as the pupil premium plus and demonstrate the impact on progress.

Pupil Voice

- A key feature of the PEP process is the participation of the pupil. Their voice should be at the centre of the discussion and e-PEP makes provision to record this. Where the pupil is unwilling to join the meeting, the record of this prior discussion should be presented. If the pupil does not wish to share their view, this should be recorded.
- EYFS Voice of the Child can be captured on the e-PEP system. Familiarise yourself with this so that you can translate into language suitable for the child. It is interactive and they find it a fun way to share their views.

How to write good outcomes

- Targets should be **specific to the pupil** and expressed from a personal perspective, not a service one.
- Targets are not provision – provision is what must be provided to meet a pupil’s needs and enable outcomes to be achieved.
- Targets should support **high aspirations** and set **high expectations**. They should build on what is working well and address what is not working well.

- Make targets **SMART** with a clear purpose.

- **Effective interventions and Additional Provision**

- **The Virtual School** ensure they keep up to date with current research and practice on the most effective interventions to close the gap. They call on national and local research to inform advice to schools, as well as discussions with the pupils and young people themselves. The VS can advise schools on a range of additional provisions that are available to support the outcomes of Cared for Children.

- **Measuring the impact of the pupil premium**

- The impact of all interventions needs to be evaluated. The focus should be on accelerated progress/closing the gap rather than maintaining current progress. Reviewing the previous targets is an important part of the PEP meeting.

SUPPORTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

- Once a pupil (over 5 years of age) becomes cared for the school receive a **daily telephone call** from **Welfare Call** to check on attendance and reasons for absence. Any absence should be checked daily by the school and the DT should inform the social worker immediately of any safeguarding concerns.

- Attendance must be accurately recorded on e-PEP and if the pupil is at risk of persistent absence a PEP should be arranged urgently.
- If there has been recent fixed term suspension the reasons and subsequent actions must be discussed and recorded in detail. Exclusion of a cared for child is regarded as a serious matter. Please see our Exclusion policy. Holidays are not authorised during term time. Absence during term time other than illness/medical must be agreed by the Virtual School Head and Fostering Head of Service.

SUPPORTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

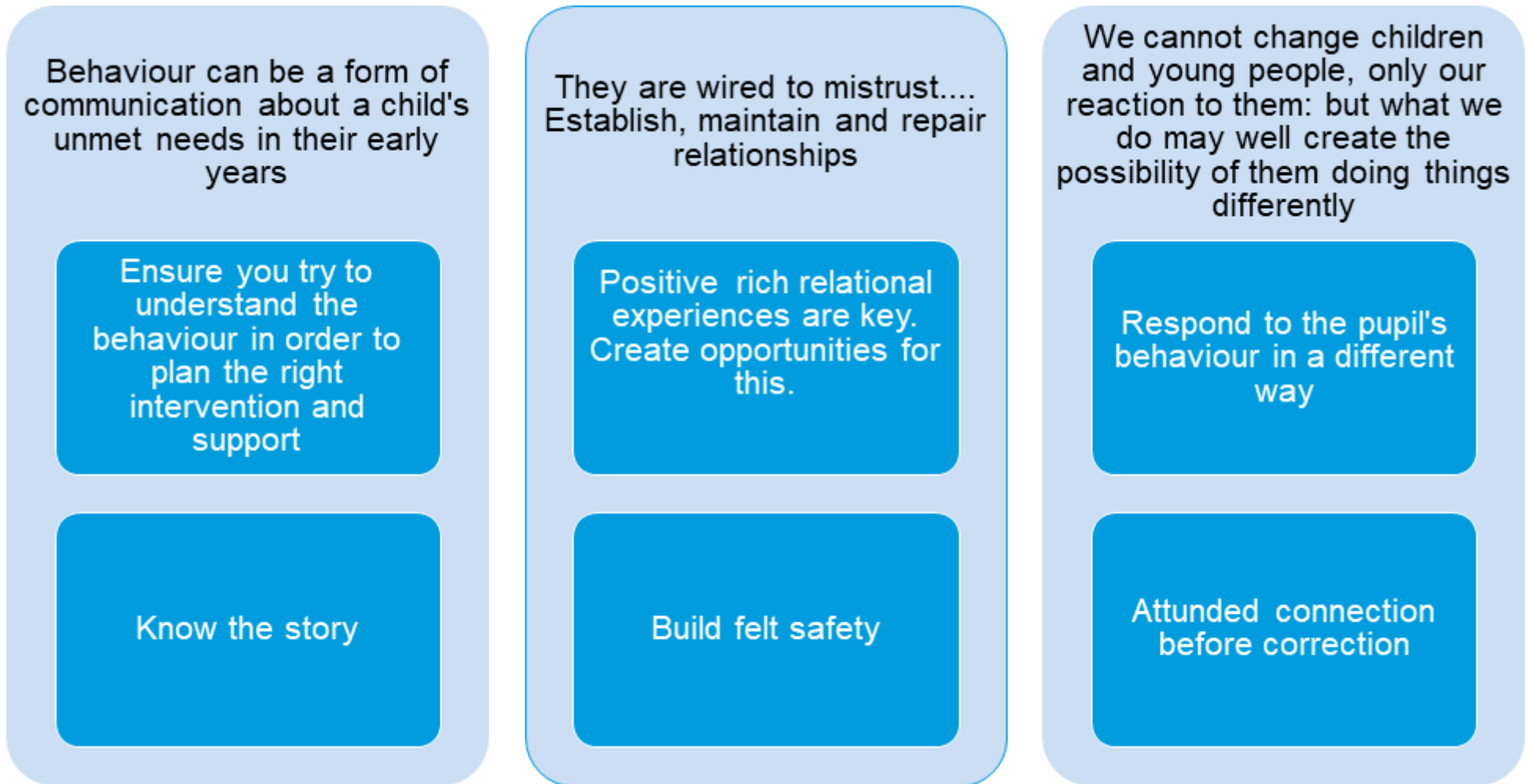
• Behaviour we may find challenging, can be an indication of unmet needs. The VS should be contacted at the earliest signs of behaviour difficulties in order that they can work with the school on early intervention solutions. The VS has links with specialist providers and can direct schools to support. Schools should try to identify

whether there are contributory factors and intervene early to reduce the need for a subsequent suspension or exclusion.

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- Where behaviour is causing greater concern, an emergency PEP meeting is an appropriate forum for a multi-agency assessment discussion. The meeting should involve the Virtual School and should be informed by reports from relevant professionals such as Educational Psychologist, CAMHs consultant, or school SENCO.
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- The PEP should give high priority to strategies to support positive behaviour for learning.
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- The VS promotes Attachment and Trauma Aware practice and strategies, Trauma Responsive Education as well a Relational Practice.
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- The PEP document is a recording of the child’s education experience and will be added to their ‘life story’. When recording the meeting and setting targets, it is important that we are mindful of using ‘language that cares’.
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Page 90

CARED FOR CHILDREN AND BEHAVIOUR WE FIND CHALLENGING



Attachment and Trauma Awareness – Recommended reading list

Bomber, L., (2016) *Attachment Aware School Series: Bridging the gap for troubled pupils*, Worth Publishing

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- **Bomber, L., (2007)** *Inside I'm Hurting: Practical Strategies for Supporting Children with Attachment Difficulties in Schools*, Worth Publishing
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- **Bomber, L., (2011)** *What about me?: Inclusive Strategies to Support Pupils with Attachment Difficulties Make it Through the School Day*, Worth Publishing
-
- **Bomber, L., Hughes, D., (2013)** *Settling to Learn: Settling Troubled Pupils to Learn: Why Relationships Matter in School*, Worth Publishing
-
- **Cameron, C., Connelly, G., and Jackson, S., (2015)** *Educating Children and Young People in Care: Learning placements and caring schools*, JKP
-
- **Cozolino, L., (2013)** *The Social Neuroscience of Education: Optimizing Attachment & Learning in the Classroom*, Norton
- **Forbes, H., Post, B., (2006)** *Beyond Consequences, Logic and Control: A Love-Based Approach to Helping Children with Severe Behaviours*, Volume 1, bci
- **Geddes, H., (2006)** *Attachment in the Classroom: The links between children's early experience, emotional well-being and performance in school*, Worth Publishing
- **Riley, P., (2010)** *Attachment Theory and the Teacher-Student Relationship: A Practical Guide for Teachers, Teacher Educators and School Leaders*, Routledge
-
- **Siegel, D., Payne Bryson, T., (2015)** *No-Drama Discipline: The Whole-Brain Way to Calm to Chaos and Nurture Your Child's Developing Mind*, Scribe
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- **Street, K., (2014)** *School as a Secure Base: How peaceful teachers can create peaceful schools*, Worth Publishing
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KS5 PEPS

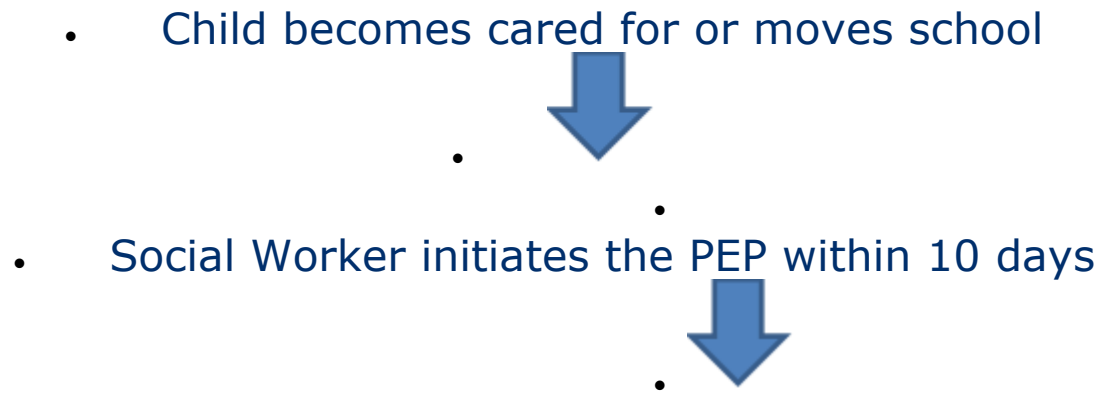
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- Key Stage 5 peps are currently held twice a year, in the Autumn Term and in the Summer Term. Any young person becoming looked after should have a pep within 10 days to inform the Pathway plan.
- **The Autumn Term PEP** (or first PEP) should cover:
 - That the young person has access to a bursary and understands when they will receive it.
 - That the course meets their long-term plans, or it is not too late for them to change if they need to.
 - They know the designated teacher and key support staff, safe spaces and how to access help.
- **Spring Term PEP**
 - The purpose of the second PEP is to ensure they are on target to reach their end of year qualification(s) and to clarify the plans for the following year.
 - A third PEP can be called by any professional supporting the young person, including school, social worker, Virtual School etc. if there are any areas of concern. This may include attendance, punctuality, or behaviour – this allows support to be put in place for the young person.
- Key Stage 5 PEPs are accessed on the e-PEP system. The link is: www.egov.uk.com
- All young people should be encouraged to complete the student's views regardless of whether they are in education, employment, training, or Not in Education, Employment or Training. This allows the student voice to be captured.
- Pupil Premium plus ceases at the end of year 11, the bursary is used for transport, equipment etc.
- For any queries regarding Key Stage 5 PEPs
- Laila Rehman – 07776620124 or email laila.rehman@torbay.gov.uk
- Anna Walker – 07775 014777 or email anna.walker@torbay.gov.uk
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EARLY YEARS PEPS

- Early years PEPs are currently held three times a year, in the Autumn Term, Spring Term and in the Summer Term. Any young person becoming cared for should have a PEP within 10 days to inform the care plan.
- The responsibility for holding the PEP is the same as statutory age children. For a child new to care or changing educational provision, the Social Worker is responsible for organising and chairing the PEP meeting. For all further PEP meetings, the Designated Teacher is responsible for organising, chairing the meeting and for the completion of the PEP on the e-PEP system, withing 10 days of the meeting happening. Unlike statutory school aged children, pre-school children do not have a PP+ allowance to request funding from. They are entitled to EYPP which will be paid direct to the provision from the LA the provision is under. Providers will receive a proportion of the EYPP based on the hours the young person is accessing. However, if the PEPs take place and are completed there is funding of £50 per child, linked to the targets, per term, at the Virtual School's discretion.

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PEP FLOWCHART



- - Social Worker completed Section A and marks completed
 - Designated Teacher pre-populates Section B



- Designated Teacher and Social Worker liaise to capture Pupil Voice on the PEP



- The PEP meeting occurs and is recorded on the PEP



- Within 1 week of the meeting, the Designated Teacher and Social Worker ensure the PEP is complete and **their sections are marked completed**



- The Virtual School approve and pay PP+ funds, quality assure, sign off and record PEP.

Appendix 4: Glossary

ARE - Age related expectations

ASD - Autistic Spectrum Disorder (Condition)

CC - Continuous Care

CFC - Cared For Children

CPD - Continuing Professional Development

DT - Designated Teacher

EBACC - English Baccalaureate

EHCP - Education, Health and Care Plan

EOTAS - Education Other Than At School

EP - Educational Psychologist

ePEP - Electronic Personal Education Plan

EYFS - Early Years Foundation Stage

FE - Further Education

FTX - Fixed Term Exclusion now known as suspension

GLD - Good Level of Development

GSCE - General Certificate of Secondary Education

HEI - Higher Education Institution

KS - Key Stage

LAIT - Local Authority Interactive Tool

MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty

NEET - Not in Education, Employment or Training

PA - Persistent Absence

PMLD - Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities

PP+ - Pupil Premium Plus

PRIM - Progress review intervention monitoring

PX - Permanent Exclusion

RI - Requires Improvement (OFSTED category)

RSA - Request for Statutory Assessment

RWM - Reading, writing, maths

SALT - Speech and Language Therapist

SATS - Standardised Assessment Tests

SEMH - Social and Emotional Health

SEN - Special Educational Need

SENCO - Special Educational Needs Coordinator

SGO - Special Guardianship Order

SMART - Specific, measurable, attainable, realistic/relevant, time bound

STEM - Science, technology, engineering and maths

TA - Teaching Assistant

THRIVE - A therapeutic approach to help support children with their emotional and social development

UASC - Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

VS - Virtual School

VSHT - Virtual School Head Teacher

YP - Young person

Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Board

Date: 19 February 2024

Wards affected: All Wards

Report Title Mental Health Support Team Overview

When does the decision need to be implemented? N/A

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Cllr Nick Bye, Cabinet Member for Children's
nick.bye@torbay.gov.uk

Director/Divisional Director Contact Details: Nancy Meehan, Director of Children's Services.
NancyMeehan@torbay.gov.uk

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the work being conducted in Torbay Schools from the Mental Health Support Team (MHSTs).

The Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) is a service designed to meet the mental health needs of children and young people in primary, secondary and further education (primarily for ages 5 – 18). The funding for the service is provided nationally and not all schools within a local area, or all local areas are able to participate in the programme.

The purpose of MHSTs is to :-

- Deliver evidence-based interventions for mild to moderate mental health needs.
- Support senior mental health leads to introduce or develop a whole school approach.
- Give timely advice to schools and college staff, and liaise with external specialist services, to help children and young people get the right support and stay in education.

2. Overview of the current service delivery and outcomes

Torbay currently has 2 MHST's: one from Wave 1 funding that began training in 2019 and were operational in 2020 and the second from wave 5 funding that began training in September 2021 and became operational in 2022. Implementation and roll out of MHST is per NHS E/I and DfE National guidance and allocations.

Within Torbay there are 49 educational settings including Primary, Secondary, Specialist and alternative provisions. The MHST's in Torbay support 38% of educational settings (excluding specialist and alternative provision); where specialist provision is included, the MHST's support 41% of Torbay's educational settings. Based on 1 MHST being able to support 7500 CYP, 74.4% of the eligible school age population in Torbay have access to the MHST. The educational settings the Torbay MHST's currently support is listed in the table below.

Wave 1	Wave 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Saints Babbacombe C of E Primary School • Brixham College • Curledge Street Academy • Kings Ash Academy • Oldway Primary School • Paignton Academy • Roselands Primary School • Shiphay Learning Academy • St Mary Church of England Primary and Nursery School • Torquay Boys' Grammar School • Torre Church of England Academy • Watcombe Primary School <p>(Total 12)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furzham Primary and Nursery School • Homelands Primary School • Sherwell Valley Primary School • South Devon High School • St Cuthbert Mayne School • The Spires College • Torquay Academy • Mayfield School <p>(Total 8)</p>

The teams are fully recruited and operational with 21 members of staff covering 20 schools and 15,000 school aged children. There is no current waiting list in Torbay for MHST.

There are two teams:

Our community team is made up of **Child Wellbeing Practitioners (CWPs), supervisors, managers and senior practitioners** who offer 1-1 and group work from an evidenced based Low-intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (Li-CBT) framework. This is offered within Devon and Torbay within a community approach.

The school's team is made up of **Education Mental Health Practitioners (EMHPs), supervisors, managers and senior practitioners** who offer Whole School Approach's (WSA) to mental health. This includes workshops for children, parents/carers and education staff, consultations/supervision, mental health ambassador training, school audits, assemblies and drop in's. EMHPs also offer 1-1 and group work from an evidenced based Low-intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (Li-CBT) framework.

The offer provided within Torbay is:

Child and young person focused support:

- 1-1 CBT interventions- 9 individual options
- Group interventions
- Decider skills groups
- Understanding and managing low mood workshop
- Exam stress workshop
- Resilience and dealing with change workshop
- Sleep hygiene workshop
- Participation and engagement (Mental Health Ambassador training) + refresher/top-up
- Understanding and managing anxiety workshop
- Transition workshop
- 10 a day workshop

Education staff support:

- Staff awareness of mental health workshop
- Introduction to our service
- Time to reflect supervision space
- Consultations
- Spotting burnout and stress reduction workshop
- General Staff Wellbeing and 10 a day workshop
- Promoting a mentally health environment
- Exam stress support workshop

Parents/Carers support:

- Understanding children's mental health
- Supporting transitions
- Understanding and managing anxiety workshop
- Parents evening stand/ transition stand / open evening
- 10 a day workshop
- Supporting your child through exam stress
- 1-1 and group parent-led interventions

The service have created **17 YouTube videos** explaining each of our interventions. The link below takes you to the clips where the young people, carers, education staff and team describe their experiences and interventions.: [Mental Health Support Team \(MHST\) - YouTube](#)

3. Measuring our Progress with Key Performance Indicators

The Torbay MHST's have accepted 939 referrals across the pathway in 2023.

EMHPs: 447 CWP: 110 (please note this doesn't include all the YP referred internally to CWP). They have also supported a further 382 digital interventions.

The table below details the activity the Torbay MHST's have undertaken in 2022 - 2023;

Number of parent/carer workshops:	22 workshops – 410 parents
Number of education staff workshops/training:	322 workshops – 1066 education staff
Number of consultations:	242 - consultations
Number of Children and Young people (CYP) workshops:	270 workshops- 4071 CYP
Number of CYP accessing 1-1 interventions:	939 young people

The following is direct feedback provided to the service from families and schools:



4. Next steps

A prioritisation matrix was developed to help inform team placement and rollout, and this has been refreshed to provide a current updated position. The prioritisation matrix is based on; average % of pupils with Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), CYP with SEND whose primary need is mental health, CYP social emotional and mental health (SEMH) and pupils eligible for pupil premium. Based on this matrix as Torbay currently has 74.4% coverage of pupils with access to a MHST, it would require 0.69 of a team to reach 100% coverage.

Devon ICB are currently awaiting an update from NHS E/I regarding funding for future MHST's. Based on the current known NHS E/I allocation, we are not anticipating any further teams for Torbay. Should any further allocations be made available, NHS Devon is in a position to proceed at pace

with any expressions of interest. In parallel plans will be developed in 2023/24 to maximise the impact of the MHST's currently working within Torbay in line with the criteria set by NHS E/I.

The MHST Steering Group have developed an outcomes framework to demonstrate the impact of MHST's at an individual, school and system level. This work has been supported in part by the Academic Health Science Network. This will form part of the future reporting of impact.

Meeting: Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board

Date: 18 12 2023

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Family Hub Sustainability

When does the decision need to be implemented? N/A

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Cllr Nick Bye, Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Nick.Bye@torbay.gov.uk

Director/Divisional Director Contact Details: Nancy Meehan, Director of Children's Services
nancy.meehan@torbay.gov.uk

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report has been prepared to provide members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board with an update on the sustainability plan for Family Hubs following the end of the Start for Life Funding 31/03/2025.

2. Reason for Proposal and its Benefits

- 2.1 To ensure new and enhanced Family Hub and Early Intervention services can continue to be delivered post March 2025 to ensure children and families continue to receive the right services at the earliest opportunity.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- 3.1. That members of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board note the contents of the report and continue to receive updates on the Family Hub sustainability plan.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Overview of each Family Hub workstream

Background Documents

N/A

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Family Hubs and Start for Life programme; this programme aims to join up and enhance services delivered through transformed family hubs in local authority areas, ensuring all families can access the support they need.
- 1.2 Torbay Council was selected, as one of 75 local authorities, to:
- provide support to parents and carers so they are able to nurture their babies and children, improving health and education outcomes for all.
 - contribute to a reduction in inequalities in health and education outcomes for babies, children and families across England by ensuring that support provided is communicated to all parents and carers, including those who are hardest to reach and/or most in need of it.
 - build the evidence base for what works when it comes to improving health and education outcomes for babies, children and families in different delivery contexts.
- 1.3 Furthermore, Torbay Council was one of 14 local authorities to be awarded trailblazer status to go further and faster in delivering all 3 eligible workstreams: Parenting Support, Infant Feeding and Peri-natal Mental Health.
- 1.4 Please see appendix 1 for an overview of each workstream.
- 1.5 Torbay were chosen to be part of the Ofsted Thematic Review and National Evaluation. Receiving positive feedback on the progress made and seamless delivery of services by the Family Hub partnership.
- 1.5 In order to ensure implementation of Torbay's Family Hub model continues beyond the end of the funding as set out in the spending review, we have approached the transformation and spend of funding in a sustainable way. Such as, focussing on train the trainer and peer supporter programmes.
- 1.6 As well as ensuring delivery of the universal offer as specified within the Start for Life Framework, we have used the JSNA, Exeter University Research and local needs assessments (such as Early Help, Youth Work) to ensure the funding is used to respond to the unique needs for Torbay Families. This includes the establishment of the Breathing Space Team to work with parents who have had repeat removal of children, are known to unborn baby panel and our care experienced young people considering starting their own families.

1.7 Now all workstreams are established and delivering against the Start for Life framework, we are focussing on 3 elements:

1. measuring impact and outcomes. Including training practitioners across the family hub network in outcome star and empowerment star as a tool to measure distance travelled.
2. Reaching our underserved children and their families, a task and finish group has commenced and included scoping out where families are currently accessing support outside of the 3 Hubs, how we can take services to them and breaking down barriers to access the hubs.
3. Sustainability and exit planning. The DfE have asked we send case studies and evidence of impact and outcomes from our measurement tool to lobby central government for an extension to the funding. Until an extension is confirmed, we are working on the basis the funding will cease in March 2025.

1.8 Current sustainability planning includes:

1. Meeting regularly with the commissioner of the 0-19 service to review spend so far and plan for year 3 with a focus on which posts will cease, work which is now business as usual and can be absorbed, and which posts/initiatives need to be considered as part of the 0-19 service re-procurement.
2. We have internally reviewed the posts initially recruited during the set-up phase and reduced posts and absorbed posts as part of the internal restructure which has been in place since the 1st of September 2023.
3. Working with Business Intelligence to collate Management Information with qualitative data to create a Family Hub Dashboard which will be triangulated with the Children's Services Management and Performance data to review where Family Hub work had reduced the number of children and young people escalating to statutory services.

2. Options under consideration

2.1 Including Family Hub workstreams within the 0-19 re-procurement. Please note Family Hub spend is currently due to end March 2025 which does not align with the dates of the re-procurement which is an agenda item at the 0-19 re-procurement board.

2.2 Aligning Family Hubs to the 2024-2027 Early Help strategy.

2.3 Identifying cost reductions within statutory services that could be diverting towards Family Hub.

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

3.1 The current spend for Family Hubs in year 3 is £932,600.00 of which IRO of 60% is transferred to the 0-19 service.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 N/A

5. Engagement and Consultation

5.1 Each Family Hub has a parent carer panel supported by VCS partners. We also engage with families accessing support via surveys and use of measurement tools such as outcome star.

6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

6.1 Considered within the 0-19 re-procurement and currently managed via the current 0-19 contract.

7. Tackling Climate Change

7.1 N/A

8. Associated Risks

8.1 We are not able to continue 100% of the Start for Life programme and will need to review and agree which initiatives are reduced or ceased.

9. Equality Impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people	Services delivered to parents with younger people.		
People with caring Responsibilities	Young Carers and Parent Carers are supported via the hubs.		

People with a disability	Hubs provide services to children and young people who experience SEND.		
Women or men	Current data evidence parents who are women are accessing services more than parents who are men. Specific workstream to engage Dad's in accessing services.		
People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) (Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)			No differential impact
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)			No differential impact
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual	Health visitors are receiving the institute of Health Visting LGBTQ+ training.		
People who are transgendered			No differential impact
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership			No differential impact
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave	Focus of Start for Life programme is in on expectant parents and parents with children ages 0-2.5 yrs.		
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)	Current task and finish group working on engaging families from our underserved communities.		
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)	Focus of the Start for Life programme is to provide support to parents and carers so they are able to nurture their babies and children, improving health		

	and education outcomes for all		
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10. Cumulative Council Impact

- 10.1 Start for Life and Family Hubs aim to reduce the number of families known to statutory services across health, social care and education through the delivery of interventions with families at the earliest opportunity.

11. Cumulative Community Impacts

- 11.1 Start for Life and Family Hubs aim to identify needs and the earliest opportunity and to connect families to the right support within their community to improve health and education outcomes for all.

PERINATAL INFANT MENTAL HEALTH AND PARENT INFANT RELATIONSHIPS

100%

New fathers' depression rates are double the national average for men in the same age group.



Around 1 in 5 women will experience mental health problems during or after pregnancy.

122

babies under the age of one are living with a parent who has a mental health condition



Suicide is the leading cause of direct maternal death within a year of having a baby.

Statistics from Maternal Mental Health Alliance

Workstream Priorities

Workforce Development	Parent Infant Relationships	Peer Supporters	A layered approach	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-workforce training to ensure professionals and volunteers are better able to support families • PNMH* competency framework • Establish a PNMH / Parent Infant relationship team • Recruit & train parent connectors and social prescribers • Develop a peer support network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated member of staff in place trained in IAPT* and VIG* supporting teenage parents and parent infant relationships • Building Babies Brains - training champions in Torbay • Groups to support bonding e.g. baby massage, circle of security • Reflective supervision • My developing baby groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a peer support network with a local charity to extend reach to communities • Provide group and 1:1 support to mothers, fathers and care givers • bring together people with shared experiences to support each other 	<h3>Training</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist training e.g. NBO*, IHV train the trainer • Infant mental health training for hub and health practitioners e.g. emotional • Multiagency induction training - infant mental health awareness • Community Champions, peer supporters & community connectors • Champions sharing the message and promoted in community venues 	<h3>Support</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community champions / peer supporters - pass it on model • Multiagency information advice & guidance • Group support in hubs & community e.g. Talkworks, Bluebells • 1:1 Emotional wellbeing support • Improved pathway to PNMH team
Fathers / co-parents	Perinatal mental health	Campaign messages	<h3>Parent feedback from emotional wellbeing visits</h3> <p>“ I just wanted to send you an email to say how grateful I am for your support, I struggled with my emotions and mental wellness for a few weeks after Cody's birth, but your support has absolutely helped me, it's unearthed and helped me through the trickiness of the issues that surrounded Harry and given me the space to be heard and talk about my emotions without any judgement or shame, without having to put on a strong act as I would normally in front of family and friends. I really hope that you can grow your group for helping others like myself. It has helped me get strong enough to find my flow of my new life with my new baby and be present enough to be able to enjoy him, rather than falling into a depression and anxiety lead place. ”</p> <p>“ M has helped us a lot as a family. My partner was struggling with bonding with my baby and She gave great advice and techniques. I feel I can talk to her about any problems. I started getting anxious and she has given me relaxation techniques to try and other advice. Every time I felt better for seeing her. ”</p> <p>“ The program has been key to my healing and I cannot recommend it enough as a pathway for other fathers who have experienced trauma during the birth of their child. ”</p>	

*PNMH - Perinatal Mental Health *IAPT - Improving access to Psychological Therapies **VIG - video interactive guidance *NBO- Newborn behaviour observations

Infant feeding

How We Will Achieve This:

- Developed a comprehensive peer support package
- Community engagement at grassroots
- Increase Infant Feeding support activity in the community
- Invested in training for staff and peer supporters
- Developing a face to face antenatal offer
- Targeted support for families including first time and young mums
- Work with local businesses and the community to provide welcoming breastfeeding environments
- Offer support for the wider family
- Develop a comprehensive education package



PEER SUPPORTER INSIGHTS

Our Vision is for breastfeeding to be normalised and protected, where mothers feel emotionally and physically supported and able to feed at home and in the community.

The infant feeding group, peer supporter and family hub staff came together to start to co-design the offer. Below are the insights

Virtual support

Insights

- Via Social Media
- BF peer support page (Private & Moderated)
- Shifts to cover responding
- Infant Feeding online course

What we are doing

- New social media posts being designed
- Infant Feeding lead and peer supporters exploring this
- Putting a rota system in place
- Looking at whether their is already in place elsewhere or develop locally

Family Hubs

Workstream priorities

- Develop a comprehensive peer support package
- Invest in training for staff and peer supporters
- Targeted support for families including first time and young mums
- BF masterclasses to be delivered in family hubs, not just hospital

To be developed

- Work with local businesses and the community to provide welcoming breastfeeding environments
- Offer support for the wider family
- Develop a comprehensive education package
- Community engagement at grassroots
- Infant Feeding community campaign to raise awareness - 'did you know'

Community

Insights

- Volunteering at community groups and GP/Hospital
- Support events like Children's and Baby week
- Explore new venues to offer peer support
- Link with community venues and parent carer panels

What we are doing

- Working with peer supporters setting up a rota to cover community groups / GP through increased number of supporters
- Working together to provide infant feeding friendly spaces
- Introducing breastfeeding friendly Torbay scheme

"My breastfeeding journey has been successful even with a few challenges but my health visitor was so supportive we are still going strong at 4 months!"

Being a Breastfeeding Peer supporter means that I can feel confident in the information I am providing to parents. I feel that I have been on a real journey of discovery and have learnt more about myself through this training, and how I want to support other people now and in the future."

Peer Supporters

Peer supporters insights

- Leaflets for signposting
- Home Visits/Health Visitor escorted - Introduction to peer support
- Attend Breastfeeding Masterclass, supporting and sharing information on family hub services
- Attend family hub groups to provide infant feeding support

What we are doing

- Developing an information pack based on feedback from peer supporters
- This is being considered as part of the infant feeding workstream
- The increase in peer supporters will enable supporter to attend the breastfeeding masterclasses
- Peer supporters are now attending 7 groups in family hub & the community

"For me personally, being a peer supporter is a great way to feel more connected with the community. I believe it is really important for the health and wellbeing of families that they can access information and support in a safe environment. I think it creates a really positive space to encourage parents/caregivers, celebrate achievements and access credible information. I have been given information and have been signposted to services by peer supporters before becoming one myself and I know how valuable the support can be. Being able to provide support to other people makes me feel proud of the training I have done."

Parenting

We already have a firm foundation on which to progress our parenting offer with a number of the “go further” options in Year 1, including

- Establish a parenting team to co ordinate and deliver a range of parenting support interventions from antenatal onwards with includes IAPT qualified family support workers trained in VIG, family intervention and social workers.
- Using a train the trainer approach to upskill the wider workforce and community partners in the Solihull approach. We have already trained midwives, our public health nurses, family support workers and the family intervention team. Solihull is offerered to all parents on a waiting list
- Develop our offer to dads, co parents and parents of teenagers
- Using our social prescriber to engage more effectively with primary care.
- Expanding our approach to peer support.



Parenting



We have supported 108 children during this quarter using a whole family approach

“The support I've received I've come a long way, feel more confident in myself and every step I've made *** has helped me. Nobody else has or would have helped me.”

“Having someone there to help me through the toughest times I have mentally and physically had to face and remind me that I'm doing all I can and that I'm not to be so hard on myself. Having someone there that I can be vulnerable in front of when I need to be and them tell me it's OK I don't have to be strong all the time. I can be honest without judgment.”

“***** is amazing at what she does. Everything has been helpful, and I couldn't have gotten through the last few months without her.”

Home Learning Environment and Early Communication



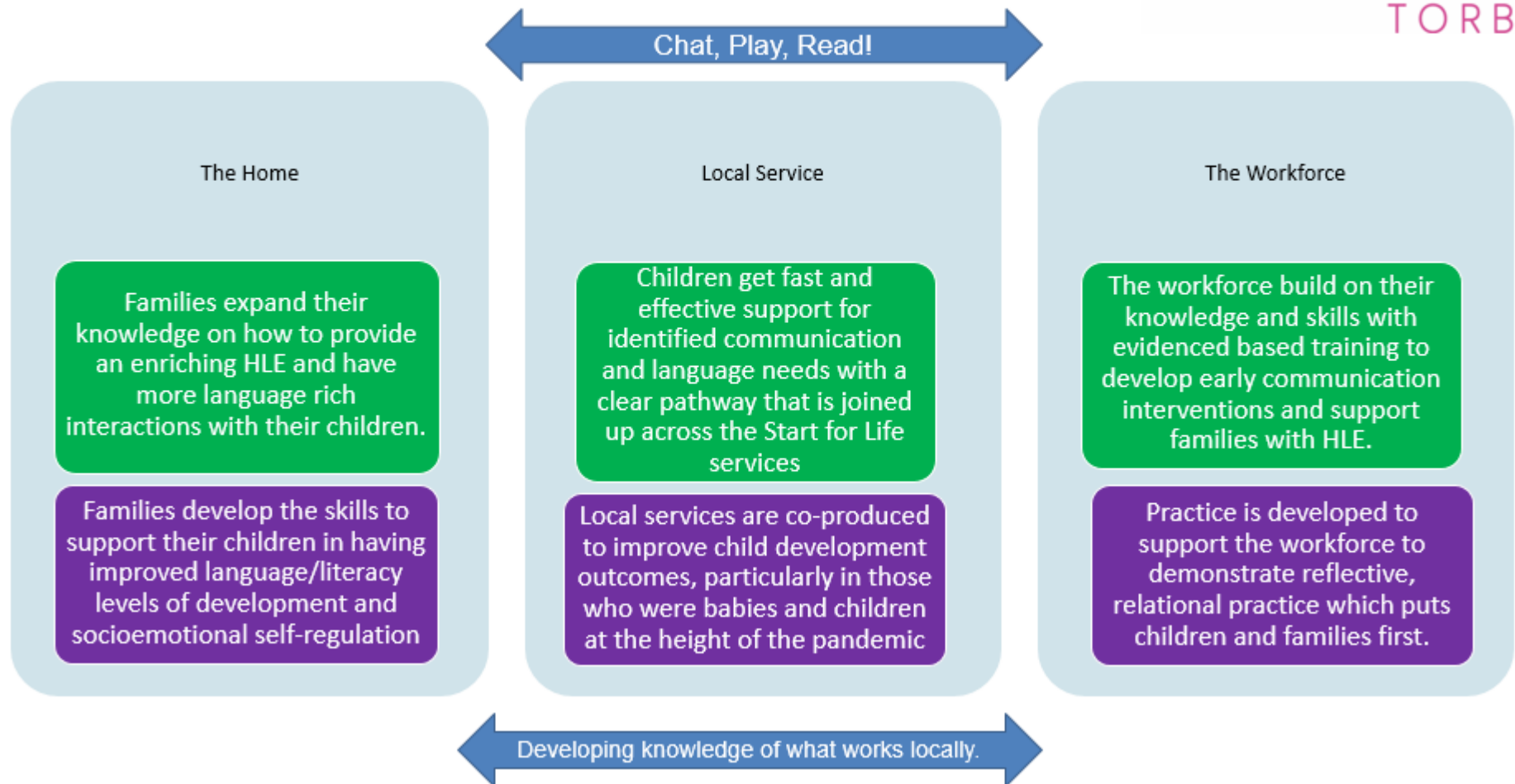
What parents carers and their child do together at home will make the biggest difference to their lives both educationally and in terms of their mental health and wellbeing!

What we are doing

- Training provided to key people in communities to support families with HLE and early communication, Chat, Play, Read (CPR) champions.
- Deliver Early Communication Interventions within the home, Early Years settings and Family Hubs
- Developing improved speech, language and communication pathways which is joined up across Start for Life services.
- Creating a range of resources to support early communication, which will be available in the hubs, community and virtually.



Home Learning Environment and Early Communication



HAF (Holiday Activity and Food) Programme - report on the uptake of the programme as requested for the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board – 18th December 2023.

Background

The HAF programme, known as 'Healthy Holidays' in Torbay, was piloted nationally in 2021 and funded by the DfE (Department for Education). The Government then announced their commitment for a further three years (2022, 2023 and 2024).

The core aims of the HAF programme are to ensure that children and young people (CYP) who are eligible for income-based free school meals (FSM) have access to food, physical activities, and enrichment activities during the longest holiday periods when their school is closed, i.e. tackling 'holiday hunger' and isolation. These holiday periods are the Easter, Summer and Christmas holiday periods.

All HAF provision is to be available for a minimum of four hours per day, for four days per week and for one week in Easter, one week over the Christmas period and for four weeks in the Summer holiday.

Both 2021 and 2022 saw some unpredicted challenges with COVID-19 and Strep A impacting on a lot of the HAF delivery across the country, but overall, we have seen good take up of the holiday club offer in Torbay and have had some brilliant feedback from parents/carers, children and young people accessing the programme and from the providers running the holiday clubs.

Nationally 2023 has seen challenges with the cost of delivering holiday clubs rising, staff recruitment concerns for some providers, and locally we have seen that the unpredictability of the weather can impact on attendance.

How we deliver our HAF provision in Torbay:

The DfE allocate a set amount of grant funding for Torbay HAF, of which 10% is then allocated for administration costs, and the remainder is allocated for face-to-face holiday club provision.

We operate a procurement process to determine the best-placed holiday club providers in Torbay to meet the necessary requirements for the HAF Programme and work with those providers to ensure that the standards set out by the DfE and by Torbay Council are met.

We look to ensure that our HAF provision offers suitable activities for primary and secondary aged children and young people, provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), is geographically well situated and is accessible during the main holiday periods. We try to ensure there is a good mix of school-based and community-based venues and that the holiday clubs offer a good range of activities for the children and young people.

We also focus on offering spaces to children and young people who are Electively Home Educated (EHE) in Torbay to offer them the opportunity to socialise with others during the school holiday periods. We made this decision locally because we have a relatively high number of children and young people who are EHE and this has increased since the pandemic. We understand that attending the holiday clubs can offer so much more than just ensuring that children have access to food, and we wanted to share the opportunity with children who wouldn't normally have the opportunity to spend time with other children or adults outside of their home environment.

HAF has a Steering Group made up of colleagues from Children’s Services (Participation Team, Virtual School Extended Duties, Early Years, Learning and Development Team and chaired by the Director of Children’s Services), Public Health, Active Devon, Sanctuary Housing, and the Sports and Events Team. The Steering Group help to evaluate the applications from potential providers, help guide and advise the Project Manager, visit the holiday clubs when they’re in session, undertake quality assurance visits and checks, and ensure that the whole programme is fulfilling its intentions and meeting the needs of eligible families in Torbay.

We have developed strong working relationships with Cornwall, Plymouth and Devon, and meet and email regularly to discuss our plans, share challenges, discuss trends and learn from each other. Devon and Torbay have a very close working relationship and agree to use funded places where eligibility is checked to prevent families from having to cross the border where they don’t go to school in the same county – this equates to a very small number of children each year, but we unlike other areas, have agreed to work together to meet the needs of the children where possible.

We work closely with our national advisors from Childcare Works/Hempsall’s and we have previously presented at their request in a best practice webinar.

Torbay HAF Data:

Easter	2021	2022	2023
No. of providers	6	8	10
No. of holiday clubs	12	16	20
Total places available	397	580	621
Total no. of CYP reached	321*	998	947
No. of FSM eligible CYP	321	796	764
No. of FSM Primary CYP	239	602	637
No. of FSM Secondary CYP	82	194	127

**Only recorded FSM eligible CYP*

Summer	2021	2022	2023
No. of providers	8	7	8
No. of holiday clubs	21	17	19
Total places available	856	711	574
Total no. of CYP reached	1,496	3,591	1,571
No. of FSM eligible CYP	1,275	2,606	1,229
No. of FSM Primary CYP	986	2,225	947
No. of FSM Secondary CYP	289	381	282

Christmas	2021	2022	2023
No. of providers	9	7	9
No. of holiday clubs	12	13	19
Total places available	696	545	606
Total no. of CYP reached	635	507	N/A
No. of FSM eligible CYP	629	449	N/A
No. of FSM Primary CYP	563	337	N/A
No. of FSM Secondary CYP	72	112	N/A

Total annual data	2021	2022	2023
No. of holiday clubs	45	46	58
Total places available	1,949	1,836	1,801
Total CYP reached	2,452	5,096	N/A
No. of FSM CYP	2,225	3,851	N/A
No. of FSM Primary CYP	1,788	3,164	N/A
No. of FSM Secondary CYP	443	687	N/A

Narrative:

The Pandemic – the Christmas of 2021 was a particularly challenging period for a lot of families, as we were told as a nation to only socialise in our bubbles and not to travel. For many families, they were not in a position to risk children socialising with others outside of their household due to the health concerns or other vulnerabilities of their family or extended family, and risking the plans they were able to have over the Christmas period. We didn't fill the paid places, but that was echoed throughout England, and there was no criticism from the DfE.

Summer 2022 – We saw a spike in our reach which wasn't intentioned, but it was down to how the providers were able to be flexible with the number of children they were able to work with and one specific provider reported that they had seen 3,039 children – the provider was asked to check this figure, and they confirmed it was correct. It was also the first real holiday without a real concern of covid and we saw much more family engagement than previous holidays.

In Summer 2022 we also ran a HAF extension pilot specifically aimed at the older cohort of young people. Providers ran several pop-up and pilot activities purely over the Summer holiday period. Providers reported that they were well received by young people across the Bay and the outcomes from this pilot helped create the Community based Youth Clubs proposal which is now in place.

Christmas 2022 – We were unable to fill the paid places with FSM eligible children, but again, this was a national trend. We have discussed the concern with providers for Christmas this year and they have asked to promote their provision with additional information about what they have planned such as hampers, Father Christmas visits etc. to make the offer as attractive as possible,

but we have agreed to reflect on uptake in January with the Procurement Team as we can change our allocated percentage of the budget for Christmas 2024 if required.

National and South West data:

The DfE have presented some data for the South West from this Summer – this is the first time that we have received such feedback and we reflected on this in our South West Cluster Meeting recently. It was recognised by the DfE that much more work was needed to be able to understand the data in relation to the national picture because of the challenges that the geography brings to the South West.

Information in purple is from the DfE

Reach - The national reach figure for FSM eligible children Summer 2023 is 23.7%. The average reach for South West LAs was 21.5%, a decrease of 6.5% from summer 2022.

Torbay's reach for Summer 2023 was 21.6% (Devon was 17%)

South West LAs reported that there was an 19% decrease in the total number of FSM eligible children who attended HAF provisions over summer 2023 holidays, in comparison to summer 2022.

Age groups

- Secondary aged participation has increased significantly for the Southern authorities with the South West cluster recording a 6% increase in secondary engagement.
- Primary aged attendance has decreased by 24% across South West authorities.

Census Changes

- The number of FSM children in England has risen by almost 6.5%. Amongst South West LAs the number has risen by 6.71%.
- The secondary age cohort has risen by 4% nationally and 4.6% in South West authorities.
- FSM eligible SEND cohort has also risen by 3% nationally, South West authorities have seen an increase of 3.29%.

Funding: The total grant funding Torbay has received has decreased despite an increase in the number of children being eligible for Free School Meals:

	Total grant funding allocated	FSM eligible children and young people
2021	£611,890	5,179
2022	£575,560	5,216
2023	£548,820	5,451
2024	Not yet confirmed £548,820	

We have had fun!

There have been a huge number of activities available for children and young people to date, and we hope that we can continue to add to this list of activities. Some of the activities on offer were nature walks, cycling and bike maintenance, go carting, zorbing, sporting activities, crafting, bushcraft cooking, silent discos, surfing, mobile petting zoo, drama productions, music production, camping, yoga and many more!

Children and young people also had the opportunity to take home the food that they'd made, craft and artwork, invited parents and carers to talent shows and plays they'd practiced, and had parents and carers join in with learning football tricks and surfing.

They have also taken home activity packs, Christmas presents, food hampers, Easter eggs etc. thanks to some of our holiday club providers and local businesses.

Children and young people learned some new skills such as riding a bike, football trick shots, sign language, surfing, cooking etc., and they have also learned about nutrition, nature, growing fruit and veg, history, maths, caring for animals, and much more.

Children and young people have made new friends, said their confidence had grown and they have most definitely had fun!

Looking ahead:

We have one more year of guaranteed funding and are currently planning the procurement process for this. We are making some changes to increase the reach which includes minimising the time we fund providers for their delivery e.g., only funding four weeks and not the whole holiday period in Summer, and increasing the weighting for cost to try to maximise the budget to push down the overall costs.

We are working with the Business Intelligence Team to better understand the Children's Services data within this, and whilst there is definitely a lot of work needed (at the HAF end) to ensure the data can be better aligned, the first attempt to pull out some of the headlines from this Summer showed us that we had the following children and young people attend:

- 51 Electively Home Educated
- 46 Cared For Children
- 47 Children on a CiN Plan
- 13 Children under a CP Plan
- 12 Other children known to CS
- 32 Single Assessment

Sustainability: We are encouraging providers to become Ofsted registered to ensure that they can deliver holiday club provision in 2025 in the absence of HAF funding and for them to potentially become wraparound childcare providers if/when this is an option.

The intention for 2024 is to continue to deliver good quality, fun and thriving holiday clubs for children and young people in Torbay within the allocated budget.

The learning from HAF and the HAF Extension project has led to the Youth Service group sessions becoming open access, and for the Community Based Youth Clubs funded by Torbay Council including the offer of food and being based in community settings where young people are. We have also looked at our groups offer which includes what we offer for young carers and are starting a new group in Torquay in the new year.

We understand that there are clear links between the numerous groups and activities delivered or funded by Childrens Services and we are currently working on a Youth Hub Strategy and a Communications and Marketing Strategy to incorporate all of the Council engagement and awareness raising activities relating to the Youth Hub in partnership with the Participation Team, current providers and young people. Work is also being undertaken with the Vulnerable Pupils Team, the Youth Justice Service and Safer Communities to ensure our work is better linked, and we have had discussion with Devon Space regarding a potential digital offer for young people in Torbay.

Who has been and is involved:

HAF Providers – past and present: Imagine Torbay Multicultural Group, Kinetics Sports Group, Glo Torbay/Love Enterprise CIC, Premier Education, Lifeworks, Play Torbay, Shear Soccer, Torbay Youth Trust, Roselands Nursey, Great Parks Community Centre, Turning Heads, Sporty Stars, Imagine This.../CDT.

HAF Extension providers: Imagine Torbay Multicultural Group, Cycle Torbay, Shear Soccer, Sound Communities, Love Enterprise CIC.

Community Based Youth Club Providers: The Windmill Centre, Love Enterprise CIC, Plymouth Argyle Trust.

Youth Service group partner providers: Torquay United Community Sports Trust, Reach Outdoors.

Young Carers groups and activities partners: Oldway Tea Rooms, Babbacombe Lions, South Devon College, Orchard Forest School at Lupton House.

A selection of some feedback gathered from providers for the Summer from children and families:

- Past summers have been so difficult for me with 3 children as a parent, you and your team have helped us so much and are so grateful, we are looking forward to christmas!
- I can't believe what you provide, and lunch for free! We've had a great time and will definitely be back.
- We just wanted to say a massive thankyou from the whole family for the efforts put in this summer from yourself and your team! The girls can't wait to get back in the zorbs!
- Both my children have been asked not to return to other Summer Provision. You guys have a special skill to engage children with very high needs, I don't know what I would do without this and the breaks for me.
- Thanks for the past week of activities our kids haven't stopped going about how much fun they have had. They are so peaceful in the evening after the days activities tiring them out!
- My kids absolutely loved holiday camp and have spoken so highly of all the activities they were involved in.
- This is the only place I can leave O and not worry, he just loves coming here and he is dressed and ready at 5am!
- R was great on the first day reassuring us that A would be okay and listened to everything I had to say and how to deal with him in different situations! I left with so much confidence on that first day. Where in other situations I have left feeling unsure if it was the right thing to do sending him! so thankyou for everything.
- Without your camp this summer we would've really struggled. I am so thankful for all the team for keeping my son active and engaged throughout this summer holidays.
- The kids loved glow in the dark dodgeball and have been asking when they can come again. Thankyou!
- I would like to thank all the team at Brixham for the hard work they've put in.
- Very pleased that our sessions were running again this year - children love coming out and camping and seeing some of their friends from last year again. 'Best thing about the holidays!'
- Thankyou for everything you've done this summer. I've seen massive improvements in p's behaviour at home since attending. See you at Christmas!

- K's confidence has grown so much over the last 3 weeks, from being scared to go to dragging me out the door and not wanting to leave your camp is amazing to see. Thanks to you and your team.
- Being a single dad for the last year hasn't been easy and R has been so welcoming and supportive through this summer holidays. This program has helped me out a lot.
- I wish I could come here more - the boys absolutely love it and there just isn't many places that they can run free in a safe environment these days. Thankyou so much for all that you do!
- He has done really well here. There's not many places he feels comfortable and because he's been here for family support sessions he knows it and feels quite safe here. There's not many places where he feels like that. All you staff have been great with him, I can't thank you enough. (J, Nan and foster carer for C, 9)
- My son said he's had the best summer.
- Can't thank you and your team enough for the service you have offered.
- Absolutely amazing club my 3 children had such fun and came back so happy every single day. Thank you so much.
- My children absolutely loved it despite the bad weather! And it's an amazing form of education, sport and socialising! And gives single parents a break too! Thank you so much!
- Very happy with the whole fortnight they attended, my children really enjoyed it. Staff were really great with my kids and understood their individual needs (1- ASD child, 1 with ACEs)
- My son always has a great time, very helpful that he is able to attend whilst I'm working. Lovely team as always at Paignton! ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
- Just a small thank you for letting my children be a part of the HAF club over the summer holidays. With being a single mum and the weather not being great this club has made the holidays so much better. The children get to meet new people, make new friends and have lots of fun. All the staff are amazing and they all go above and beyond to give all the children an amazing time. Also a warm meal/lunch provided if wanted. No judgement and very welcoming. Lots of indoor and outside activities. Something for everyone. This is the best thing my children have ever had the opportunity to be a part of. It is so greatly appreciated. I cannot put into words how much this club has helped us. Thank you. G x
- Good morning. I am grateful to all the workers of the camp for a mega cool and wonderful vacation for the children. You gave me a lot of good moments of positive emotions. The children were happy, constantly smiling. Thank you for the delicious cuisine. I hope to see you next year in the summer. Sincerely, N
- We want to say a big thank you to you and all the staff for giving A a great start to her move to Devon. She loved all of it. We're sorry we never got to do this in person but we will see you again. L
- Thank you for the wonderful activities for the children, they were delighted! :) The food was varied and the children really liked the menu. Also activities with clay left the best memories for V. Thank you very much! Y
- My children and my friends children have been attending for a while now and they absolutely love it, they have a great relationship with all the staff, they feel safe and they receive great meals. You are brilliant when handling any incidents or accidents and the communication is spot on can't fault a single thing.
- Your healthy camps are a god send for low income working families! Thank you!
- My boy had a fantastic summer at the camp, he's already looking forward for next year. he was glad he met new friends too. Big Thanks to all the staff.
- So grateful for the opportunity! Special thank you for C for always greeting us happy, helpful and friendly! I was worried my eldest wouldn't want to attend and play computer games at home instead, but he enjoyed it very much and made new friends.

- I liked that even tho I had booked the meals online, my kids could change their mind about whether to have a hot meal or sandwich.
 - Thank you so much for all your hard work with the children over the summer I really appreciate it. H had a fab time and didn't want to leave.
 - I would like to make an additional comment to praise the staff. I can't fault them at all. Although they seemed young (maybe I'm just getting old) they were presentable, professional, polite and positive every time I turned up and accordingly to my 2 girls they were fun, caring and supportive throughout the summer. Great work guys.
 - Wonderful staff great fun and a lifesaver for low income families like mine. It was very well run.
 - They would be doing nothing if this wasn't running. We would not be able to afford to feed the children the extra meals.
 - We are delighted that our children tried - and liked - new food. At home we can't get them to try to new things, but around friends and encouragement from the team, they discovered that they like curry and chilli.
-
- ❖ Loved the art workshops, made some really nice willow things to give my mum
 - ❖ I am going to ask dad to buy me tools, now I know how to fix bikes
 - ❖ Best bit was spray painting, I did the 'D' ins't it awesome? It will stay here forever!
 - ❖ Is this your job? do you get paid? I didn't know you could do jobs like this, maybe I can come and work with you when I'm older as I love art.
 - ❖ This is actually very chilled, it's good at keeping me calm. I could stay here all day
 - ❖ My brother is never going to believe I made this, it's sooooo cool.
 - ❖ I've learnt how to plait today. I didn't think I could do it as I'm not very good at that sort of thing, but H showed me and now I'm super-fast.
 - ❖ Thank you loads. I have made you some cupcakes for you all.
 - ❖ I loved the Go Karting and Paddle Boarding.
 - ❖ The food was better than I thought. Really good selection.
 - ❖ I have had the best day I've have had in a long time here. Thank you.

We asked them to describe the holiday club in 3 words they said the following (many were repeated): helpful, kind, the best place, amazing, happy place, perfect, fun, safe, supportive, always there, loving, funny, open ears, caring.

Please contact sarah.pengelly@torbay.gov.uk with any questions. Thank you.

Meeting: Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board

Date: 18 December 2023

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Progress Report on the Implementation of the Children's Service Continuous Improvement Plan 2022/25

Report Author: Stephen Hart, Independent Chair, Children's Service Continuous Improvement Board

When does the decision need to be implemented? Report to be noted and the timescales for improvement to be accepted.

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Cllr Nick Bye, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, nick.bye@torbay.gov.uk

Director Contact Details: Nancy Meehan, Director of Children's Services, nancy.meehan@torbay.gov.uk

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report summarises the progress that has been made in implementing the Children's Continuous Improvement Plan 2022/25. It also details how the plan is monitored and how strengths and areas for further development are identified.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1 The Council is united in wanting Torbay to be a place where we have turned the tide on poverty and tackled inequalities; where our children and older people will have high aspirations and where there are quality jobs, good pay and affordable housing for our residents. This Continuous Improvement Plan plays a key role in delivering those aspirations for the area's children, young people and their families by sustaining a focus on those areas of service which if delivered to a consistently good or better standard will improve their lived experiences. It is the first iteration of a plan that reflects the Ofsted inspection judgement of October 2022 which determined that Torbay Children's Service had progressed to 'Good' overall having previously been judged to be 'Inadequate'. This plan reflects the service's and Council belief that we should aspire to become an 'Outstanding' service and over its three year life we believe we shall address the requirements for achieving our ambition.
- 2.2 It is recognized that the complexity and wide-ranging nature of the plan means that progress will not be uniform. Some elements of the plan will progress more quickly than others, and some elements are dependent on others being well advanced before work in earnest can begin. These inter-dependencies are recognized in the timescales allocated to each element of the plan.
- 2.3 We are also acutely conscious that any plan can be affected by variables beyond our control such as new Government initiatives or unpredicted local events that must be addressed. We believe that the plan and our internal monitoring arrangements are sufficiently robust to accommodate these challenges. This is best exemplified by reference to the development of family hubs to support our commitment to multi-disciplinary and local service development so that families can access the services they need close to their homes at the time that they need them without unnecessary recourse to statutory services. Members of this committee will recall that Torbay has been selected by central Government as a 'pathfinder authority' for this development in recognition of its current standard of work and service development, and the confidence that it has in Torbay as a Children's Service area that can help others benefit from its experiences and expertise.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Committee endorses the plan.

Background Documents

The Children's Service Continuous Improvement Plan 2022/25

1. Introduction

1.1 This Children's Continuous Improvement Plan comprises improvement priorities that are essential for the success of our ambition to become outstanding. It is complimented by the Councils Transformation Programme and our Sufficiency Strategy which quite properly focusses attention on the resources required for a successful children's service modelled in line with the detail of our vision for a child friendly Torbay. It contains our ambitious agenda for further improvement with priorities focused upon the needs of older young people in the process of transitioning to adult services, those at risk of youth homelessness and those vulnerable to exploitation and, potentially, offending behaviour. In addition, we are concerned to support young people with their health and, importantly we are seeking through this plan to stimulate the development of a revitalised and retargeted child and adolescent mental health service.

1.2 The previous iterations of the improvement plan very usefully set out its improvement priorities under 4 thematic pillars. We have chosen to follow a similar structure in the Continuous Improvement Plan but to reflect the partnership dimension of this continuous improvement plan we have introduced a 5th thematic pillar 'Robust Partnership Practice'. We have also extended the leadership, management and governance pillar to reflect the move towards a more joined up cross partnership approach to delivering children's services.

- Partnership, Leadership and Management
- A robust model of social work practice
- Robust partnership practice
- A sufficient and skilled workforce
- Quality assurance and audit.

1.3 Any plan of such magnitude and complexity requires a range of mechanisms to monitor progress to provide assurance that it is timely, meeting needs, securing 'traction' so that services that are delivered are of sufficient quality and flexible enough to be modified to reflect understanding of the needs of children, young people and their families. Torbay has adopted a four-strand approach which evaluates quantitative and qualitative material and data:

- Scrutiny of highlight and exception reports at the Children's Continuous Improvement Board (CCIB).
- Presentation to the CCIB and 'critical friend' challenge to reports by 'partner' Boards (such as Torbay's Safeguarding Children Partnership Board) who have priorities for provision of services for children, young people and families.

- Monthly, systematic ‘Deep Dive’ exercises carried out by the CCIB Chair and the Chief Executive which evaluates progress on specific areas of work.
- Periodic audit activities (including single and multi-agency audits, and dip samples) which focus on work with individual children and young people to capture how the services they have received have affected their lived experiences.

1.4 The following bullet points represent a synopsis of our current strengths and areas for improvement that have been identified by our monitoring and evaluating activities. For ease of reading and to reflect the structure of the Continuous Improvement Plan the findings are set out against the pillars of the plan. It will be quickly noted that pillars 2 and 3 have attracted most comment. This is to be expected as they are the largest areas of improvement and there is nothing to be read into the number of comments.

Strengths

- **Pillar 1**
 - Council political oversight through Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny will evaluate the effectiveness of the partnership in delivering high quality services to children.
 - Following submission of an application to be considered as part of UNICEF’s ‘Child Friendly Communities’, it is positive that Torbay has been accepted.
- **Pillar 2**
 - Torbay has been accredited as a Children’s Restorative Organisation.
 - Consistently identify risk for children.
 - The IRO Service has been enhanced by appointing a Service Manager who has taken the lead on improving children’s participation.
 - Practice standards (Ways of Working) have been revised, in line with the restorative model, and are clear about prescribed timescales.
 - Torbay has safely reduced the numbers of cared for children and continues on a downward trajectory, with significant year-on-year reductions since 2018-19.
 - Our audit activity evidences that for those children who need care, this is the right decision for them. Our adoption scorecard performance highlights the positive work being undertaken to achieve permanence.
 - The permanence Panel ensures that appropriate support is in place to ensure the plan of reunification is safe and effective, and that timely decisions are made in terms of presentation to Legal Gateway Panel with a view to entering into proceedings and seeking to discharge the Care Order.
 - Fostering families are supported politically by their attendance at the Fostering Forum,
- **Pillar 3**
 - Family hubs and partner agencies and groups provide a seamless early intervention and prevention offer which ensures children and their families have the right support at the earliest opportunity.
 - We are increasing the number of key workers who will support children and young people at an earlier stage of need and will not require a diagnostic process to have completed in order to access specialist neurodiversity provision.
 - Torbay has an effective exploitation toolkit which is embedded and used by professionals across the Torbay Children’s Safeguarding Children Partnership.

- All care experienced young people who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness, from the ages of 18-25, are also tracked through the Youth Homelessness Prevention Panel.
- The Corporate Parenting Board has strand leads to champion areas of priority, with a dedicated lead for Housing.
- **Pillar 4**
 - Succession planning for Senior Leadership is complete. The Divisional Director group and all but one Head of Service are now permanent. The Service Managers roles are all permanently filled.
 - Leadership and Development workshops have been delivered to all Advanced Social Workers and Team Managers since the winter of 2022.
- **Pillar 5**
 - Deep Dive actions are tracked and updated monthly via Children's Social Care Senior Leadership Team and monitored via Quartet.
 - A consistent and robust monitoring process remains in place in relation to performance.
 - The service now has access to a wide range of PowerBI data dashboards, which allows for live and up to date data analysis within each service.

Areas for Development.

- **Pillar 1**
 - Multi-disciplinary partnership arrangements need to be maintained by a shared focus, agreed collaborative arrangements and clear statements of accountability.
- **Pillar 2**
 - Continue to maintain a focus on management oversight and supervision as part of the quality assurance.
 - Need for robust triangulation of information, more considered analysis of historical information as an indicator of the present and the future, strengthen the use of tools in assessment and promote the need for robust and timely updates of assessments relating to cared for children.
 - Achieve consistency for children in relation to their Child Protection chairperson.
 - Increase awareness of private fostering.
 - Embed FGC in Pre-Proceedings process.
 - Reduce reliance on unregistered and unregulated placements.
 - Reduce the numbers of cared for children living at home with parents.
- **Pillar 3**
 - The s75 finance arrangement, including the service specification for the Therapeutic Wellbeing Service, is currently under review as it has not been effective.
 - Identified development work to be completed with our Child Protection Conference Chairs/IROs, and we are in the process of identifying Practice Leads for training and supporting others to embrace the theories and principles of Contextual Safeguarding.
 - The TSCP have identified that there needs to be a task and finish group considering a model of contextual safeguarding.

- The TSCP have identified that there needs to be a task and finish group considering a model of contextual safeguarding.
- The most significant challenge remains access for care experienced young people to move on accommodation, generic housing stock as opposed to specialist accommodation.
- Temporary Accommodation and Youth Homelessness is on the corporate risk register for scrutiny, commitment and oversight.
- **Pillar 4**
 - Continue to focus on staff retention, minimise reliance on agency staff and ensure effective recruitment practices.
- **Pillar 5**
 - Ensure that QA activities are appropriately focused upon qualitative as well as quantitative data and that the workforce is sufficiently skilled to identify impacts and outcomes for all children and young people.

1.5 As can be seen from the above we have been able to make some good progress in a number of areas and given the challenges that Torbay is facing, this is welcome and reassuring. The confidential headline feedback we received from inspectors following the recent JTAI inspection has largely endorsed our level of self-awareness and understanding, and we shall use the published report that is due in the early New Year to re-enforce our plan if there is need to do so. However, there is no room for complacency within the service and across the partnership and we wish to push ahead with rigour to ensure that all of those areas where we have identified areas for improvement and development receive the necessary support and opportunity to make progress. We will focus hard on our continuous improvement agenda but in parallel we shall strengthen our partnership arrangements which have been significantly affected by personnel changes and the associated discontinuity that such disruption generates. This work will commence with a Chief Executive led summit meeting of her peers and chief officers in our partnership arrangements. We shall also continue to strengthen our audit and performance evaluative capability in the realisation that an understanding of children and young people's lived experiences has to be fully secured if we are to achieve the level of improvement we have set ourselves. This work has already started in Children's Services, and we shall seek to ensure our multi-agency and multi-disciplinary approaches keep pace. Finally, work on assuring the quality of social work practice never stops but in light of the developments above, we are at an opportune moment to reflect on our standard expectations and endorse or amend them in light of our knowledge and ensure that our front-line managers are properly equipped to deliver to the highest possible standard. Again, work on this element of our plan has started and will begin in earnest with a management meeting which is scheduled for January 2024 and followed by a whole staff meeting.

2. Options under consideration

See section 1 above

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

- 3.1 All service developments in the Continuous Improvement Plan have been costed and are monitored through normal arrangements. When required, partnership funding is agreed using the relevant legislative framework and monitored through the associated procurement and commissioning arrangements.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 All elements of the plan are consistent with the relevant legislation.

5. Engagement and Consultation

- 5.1 Engagement with partner agencies and internal colleagues has been extensive and is an ongoing feature of any 'improvement journey'. In addition and crucially, the voices of children, young people and their families are increasingly directly involved in service development and delivery, for example in the creation of Family Hubs, SEND services and Cared For and Care Experienced services.

6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

N/A

7. Tackling Climate Change

N/A

8. Associated Risks

- 8.1 The Continuous Improvement Plan itself is a tool which once implemented is designed to mitigate the risks to children and young people and risks to the reputation of Torbay Council of having a service that fails to meet the minimum good standards that are required by our regulators. Our monitoring and quality assurance structures will ensure that progress is appropriately maintained.

9. Equality Impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

- 9.1 Equality impacts which do impact differently in different parts of this Improvement Plan have been built into each pillar.

10. Cumulative Council Impact

N/A

11. Cumulative Community Impacts

None.

Torbay Children's Continuous Improvement Plan: The Pathway to Excellence for Children and Young People 2022-2025

INTRODUCTION

This version of our Improvement Plan consciously retitled as 'Torbay's Children's Continuous Improvement Plan' marks a significant change in our approach. Previous versions of the plan have essentially and correctly focussed upon the requirements laid upon us by Ofsted and DFE to significantly improve the quality of children's social care, with specific emphasis upon child protection and those children who need to be cared for in order to safeguard them. We have made significant and consistently good progress in addressing our existing improvement objectives and the time is now right to move forward and tackle those issues that will enable us to achieve our ambition of creating a 'Child Friendly Torbay'. This does not mean that we are focussing our efforts on matters other than child protection and safeguarding. Rather, we are maintaining our acute focus on these two crucial areas, but the additional capacity afforded us by securing sustainable progress in other areas means that this Board can begin the process of transformation to a partnership wide drive to achieve a highly effective service for children that draws upon the full range of skills and expertise from partners.

This Children's Continuous Improvement Plan comprises improvement priorities that are essential for the success of our transformation. It is complimented by the Councils Transformation Programme and our Sufficiency Strategy which quite properly focusses its attention on the resources required for a successful children's service modelled in line with the detail of our vision for a child friendly Torbay. It contains our ambitious agenda for further improvement with priorities focused upon the needs of older young people in the process of transitioning to adult services, those at risk of youth homelessness and those vulnerable to exploitation and, potentially, offending behaviour. In addition, we are concerned to support young people with their health and, importantly we are seeking through this plan to stimulate the development of a revitalised and retargeted child and adolescent mental health service.

The previous improvement plan very usefully set out its improvement priorities under 4 thematic pillars. We have chosen to follow a similar structure but to reflect the partnership dimension of this continuous improvement plan we have introduced a 5th thematic pillar 'Robust Partnership Practice' (see below). We have also extended the leadership, management and governance pillar to reflect the move towards a more joined up cross partnership approach to delivering children's services.

- Partnership, Leadership and Management
- A robust model of social work practice
- Robust partnership practice
- A sufficient and skilled workforce
- Quality assurance and audit.

THE IMPROVEMENT JOURNEY

Children, young people and their families rightly expect high quality services, particularly in times of need. Our ambition for children and their families to benefit from good or better services in which they have 'a voice' and become fully involved remains strong and central to all that we do. We continue to understand the task ahead, and we are determined to build on what Ofsted has judged to be good progress across the services for children. The significant success we have achieved in building a largely permanent workforce led by a determined and motivated management team will help us as we move forward. As we do, we will involve our managers, our workforce and our partners to shape what we do, and we will capture the views of our service users to help us understand how best we can help.

OUR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND THE ROADMAP TO EXCELLENCE

The tables below detail the action that we are taking in order to continue to progress to excellence on our improvement journey. The document will continue to be periodically updated to show progress. It is a 'live' document which continues to be updated as required and as progress is made.

The Director of Children's Services is the overall owner of this continuous improvement plan and responsible for ensuring that its implementation is progressed and that updates continue to be provided on a monthly basis.

We are confident that if we achieve the aims and objectives set out in this plan, we will become an outstanding Local Authority Children's Service and our children and young people will benefit from consistently excellent services delivered by a highly skilled and motivated workforce in conjunction with our partners. The specific criteria used by Ofsted to assess outstanding services are reproduced below. As the Ofsted Inspectors reported in their 2022 Inspection, we are not complacent, and we are ambitious to continue to improve. This plan reflects those improvement priorities and incorporates the four recommendations made by Ofsted.

OFSTED CRITERIA FOR OUTSTANDING

Inspectors will determine the **overall effectiveness graded judgement** by taking account of the grading of the other judgements that have been agreed and by looking at:

- the extent of good practice across the service
- the extent and impact of any areas for improvement

- whether areas for improvement have been identified and the extent to which leaders and managers have a ‘grip’ on the issue

‘The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection’ is likely to be judged outstanding if the response to children and families is consistently good or better and results in sustained improvement to the lives of children, young people and their families.

‘The experiences and progress of children in care (cared for) and care leavers (care experienced)’ is likely to be judged outstanding if the response to children in care and care leavers is consistently good or better and results in sustained improvement to the lives of children in care and care leavers.

‘The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families’ is likely to be outstanding if, in addition to meeting the requirements of a ‘good’ judgement, there is evidence that leaders (both professional and political) and managers are confident, ambitious and influential in changing the lives of local children, young people and families, including children in care and those who have left or who are leaving care. They inspire others to change the lives of these children and young people and their families. They innovate and generate creative ideas to sustain the highest-quality services, including early help services, for all children and young people. They know their strengths and weaknesses well and both respond to and are resilient to new challenges. Professional relationships between the local authority and partner organisations are mature and well developed. Accountabilities are embedded and result in confident, regular evaluation and improvement of the quality of help, care and protection that is provided.

Theme 1 – Partnership, Leadership Management and Governance

Objective 1.1:

- Partnership leadership, management and governance in Torbay are strong and sharply focused on continuing to improve and sustain outcomes for children and young people.

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/ Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress
1.1.1	<p>Effective leaders and managers will determine the priorities of their organisations to deliver services for children in support of the principles of “Child Friendly Torbay”.</p> <p>Leaders and Managers will ensure that the workforce has a common understanding of the priorities for children and their intended impacts.</p> <p>Understanding the</p>	<p>Leaders and managers will demonstrate authority, vision and management skill to ensure that the service is fit for purpose and the workforce is sufficiently trained and motivated to deliver its objectives to time and within the legal framework.</p> <p>Robust Service Plans specifying individual and collective responsibilities to be in place articulating vision,</p>	CEO, DCS, Directors of partner organisations	Immediate and ongoing.	Children will benefit from consistently high quality and sustainable services, including multi-disciplinary services that are responsive to informed understanding of need	All work will be compliant with statute and local policies and procedures, when measured by audit, dip sampling, management oversight and child level performance data.	<p>Partnership boards and children’s social care services demonstrate a shared understanding of the priorities for children and young people and have the capacity to deliver services to a consistently good or better standard.</p> <p>Systematic scrutiny through the work of the Children’s Continuous Improvement Board, partnership boards and</p>

	interdependencies and application of legal frameworks are established and are demonstrated through implementation.	<p>priorities, and standards.</p> <p>Senior leaders are effective in ensuring that the workforce fully understands their priorities and how they combine in an interagency context. Leaders and managers are able to offer appropriate support and challenge when required.</p> <p>Implement our workforce strategy, to support retention and recruitment of frontline practitioners.</p>					<p>Council political oversight through Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny will evaluate the effectiveness of the partnership in delivering high quality services to children.</p> <p>Following submission of an application to be considered as part of UNICEF's 'Child Friendly Communities', it is positive that Torbay have been accepted as part of the programme and are presently in conversation with UNICEF to agree the MOU with a starting date of November/December 2023.</p>
1.1.2	Elected members will be conversant with the priorities and the challenges of the	Knowledgeable Elected Members will contribute relevant knowledge and experience from their	Council Leader, Lead Cabinet Member for Children's	Members and partnership boards to	The elected members will hold the services for	Children will benefit from members and partnership	During 2022, the CCSIP was reviewed at Children's Overview and Scrutiny and as part of

	<p>improvement priorities and will be active in offering political challenge on behalf of their communities.</p>	<p>work on partnership boards such as Overview and Scrutiny, Corporate Parenting Board and Health and Wellbeing Board.</p> <p>The Lead Member and other relevantly involved Councillors will continue to have access to the monthly data and performance reports, including highlight and budget reports that will specify and identify progress and risks to progress and enable them to discharge their statutory duties effectively.</p> <p>Partnership leads and Members will make programmed visits to services to enable them to understand progress and best practice. Visits will include</p>	<p>Services supported by the CEO.</p>	<p>be briefed on the priorities of the children's continuous improvement plan by July 2022 and relevant updates will be given when required.</p>	<p>which they are responsible to account for the provision it makes to children and their families.</p> <p>Partnership Boards will use their own arrangements for overseeing and scrutinising the work related to improvement priorities for which they are accountable.</p> <p>Members will be able to offer assurance to their communities about the progress that is being made</p>	<p>boards being able to properly scrutinise the volume and quality of services provided within their remit.</p>	<p>the Children's Service Quartet. Since the change of administration following the local elections in 2023, there has been a change in political administration however the new administration has clearly articulated that they see Children's as a priority and are committed to continuing the good work that the service has delivered to date.</p> <p>The new Lead Member for Children's has ensured that there was a Children's focus item on the recently established Cabinet and Directors Meeting. The service has also delivered to the wider Members as part of their induction information and training relating to corporate parenting, the delivery of</p>
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		opportunities to extend their existing relationships with key partners and to strengthen further their contributions to services for children made through current arrangements such as the corporate parenting board.					education services and safeguarding. We also maintain a number of Boards where there is representation from across the political landscape.
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Theme 2 – A robust model of social work practice

Objective 2.1

- *Effective supervision and management oversight will continue to support best practice and encourage and direct improvement in circumstances where progress has failed to gain traction or has stalled.*

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/ Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress
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2.1.1	<p>Supervision to be timely and will be recorded in accordance with policy requirements specifying actions when necessary.</p> <p>Supervision to be restorative and demonstrate reflection and challenge to social work practice and ensure it supports 'good' or 'better' services to children.</p> <p>The requirement for periodic management oversight is explicit and achieved.</p>	<p>Supervision records will show for example case direction, reflection, advice, decisions, endorsements of agreed actions and progress.</p> <p>Supervision specifically identifies good practice and areas for improvement.</p> <p>Supervision is regular, planned and at intervals reflective of the experience and capability of the worker.</p> <p>Management oversight is recorded on each child's file at prescribed intervals, or more frequently when necessary, and demonstrates management 'grip' and understanding of the</p>	Heads of Service, Service Managers, Team Managers, and Assistant Team Managers.	Immediate and ongoing.	<p>Children will benefit from skilled workers who have been afforded opportunity to refresh and reflect upon their approach to their work, where necessary by developing new skills.</p> <p>Children will also benefit from managers being fully conversant with their needs and when necessary, interjecting to ensure that the case is 'on track'.</p>	<p>Ensure active and robust social work intervention. Reduce drift and delay.</p> <p>Better, more structured approach to work.</p> <p>Clear management support and direction to ensure that actions required to safeguard and support children are in place and actively monitored.</p>	<p>During the last six months, there has been a focus on management oversight and supervision as part of the quality assurance requested by the CCIB.</p> <p>This was undertaken as part of the Chief Executive Deep Dives that were historically established under the previous improvement; these have continued following the Ofsted grading of 'good'. This evidenced a positive reflection from the workforce in respect of how they felt supervision supported them however also identified a potential flaw in the recording on the system which was impacting negatively on the monthly performance reporting. This has now been rectified and the outcome of the Chief Executive Deep Dive is</p>
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		<p>child's needs and how the plan will meet them.</p> <p>Supervision offers development and challenge opportunities and gives dedicated time for reflection.</p> <p>Supervision is recorded according to policy and where action on cases is required, a note is always made on the child's record and managers monitor for effectiveness.</p> <p>QA mechanisms and performance reports will ensure the robustness of supervision.</p>					<p>monitored through the Children's Focus Meeting.</p> <p>We also have been accredited as a Children's Restorative Organisation and we are also waiting for confirmation as to whether we have been accredited for our Restorative Training.</p>
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Objective 2.2:

- Improve the quality of assessments and plans for children to ensure that purposeful work achieves objectives and prevents takes place to prevent drift. Children in Need, child protection reviews and core group meetings should specifically evaluate and record children progress, in addition to sharing and updating information.*

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress
2.2.1	<p>All assessments demonstrate that historical factors and all relevant information, including ethnic and cultural issues, are considered and analysed. They will take into account the knowledge held by all relevant partners, and contributions from all relevant family members will always be included.</p> <p>The child's voice is evident, and the child's lived experience is understood.</p>	<p>Secure and sustain the quality of all assessments for children and young people which will incorporate their 'voice'.</p> <p>Demonstrate the quality of direct work to reflect that it is purposeful, meaningful, and suitable for inclusion into assessments and plans.</p> <p>Adopt a restorative approach to assessment to enable a good understanding of the diverse nature of families. The finalised assessment should be suitable to</p>	HoS, Service Managers and Team Managers to oversee, social workers to deliver.	Immediate and ongoing.	<p>Children will benefit from an assessment and subsequent plan that is comprehensively based on an understanding of their cultural needs and how services will respond to the diverse natures of families.</p> <p>In keeping with the restorative model of practice, children will contribute through direct work with their workers. Records of this work will be</p>	<p>Children's journeys, their lived experience and childhood will be understood, captured and articulated as a result of the critical contributions from the child and the family, and the skill of the workers involved in bringing together the wealth of information that is gathered.</p> <p>Most assessments will be judged to be good by</p>	<p>The quality of assessment is considered in each full audit undertaken within the audit cycle, and regular dip sampling activity also considers this separately.</p> <p>The quality of assessment within the realm of children in need of help and protection has shown significant growth in terms of the numbers meeting good, with quarterly increases sustained from 2022-23 into the 2023 audit cycle.</p>

		<p>inform a robust care plan for the child.</p> <p>Assessment quality will be subject to periodic audit process.</p>			<p>identified on files and evidenced in assessments and plans.</p> <p>Children will experience and know that their voices have been heard.</p>	<p>QA and audit processes.</p> <p>The timescales for assessment completion will be set and achieved according to the child's needs.</p> <p>The quality of assessments will lead to improvement in care plans.</p>	<p>Audit activity tells us that the strengths identified within practice in respect of assessments over the last six months include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Needs being well explored alongside the impact of lived experience. •Child and family expressed view being well captured. •Research used to identify need. •Up to date chronologies. •Clear identification of risk. •Protective factors considered and analysed.
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							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers current and historical information. • Assessments being proportionate and balanced. <p>Areas for development include the need for robust triangulation of information, more considered analysis of historical information as an indicator of the present and the future, the use of tools in assessment and the need for robust and timely updates of assessments relating to cared for children.</p>
2.2.2	Management oversight of assessments is consistently good	Management oversight continues	HoS, Service Managers and Team Managers	Immediate and ongoing.	Children will experience work that is more	Children will benefit from social workers who have a	As detailed within 2.1.1, there have been a number of activities over recent months in

	<p>and ensures that guidance is given to ensure that children receive timely, skilled help and protection.</p>	<p>to be evident on all open files.</p> <p>Ensure management oversight comprises case direction, advice, decisions and endorsements of agreed actions.</p> <p>Introduce audit activity to quality assure the requirements associated with managerial oversight.</p>			<p>structured and focused.</p> <p>Slippages and variances from the plan will be identified early.</p> <p>New requirements to ensure the effectiveness of the plan are introduced in timely ways.</p>	<p>clear understanding of the purpose of their interventions and have opportunity to work in conjunction with the professionals in relation to the actions they are taking to achieve their outcome goals.</p> <p>Management oversight will ensure that work with the child is supported, appropriately challenged and when necessary, directed to</p>	<p>relation to management oversight and supervision, indicating a positive trajectory of improvement, evidencing that managers are systematically reviewing children's files and assessments which will support good outcomes and reduce drift and delay.</p> <p>This is regularly highlighted through audit overviews presented to the Children's Focus Meeting and through performance exception reports presented to the CCIB.</p>
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						ensure a good quality service that takes account of the child's voice and needs.	
2.2.3	<p>Child in need plans and child protection plans will be produced in a timely fashion, reflect assessed need, promote improvement in the child's lived experience and are consistently evaluated for progress and impact, including the contributions made by the child.</p> <p>Core group meetings include relevant professionals and are purposeful in</p>	<p>The requirements to achieve good or better assessments and plans continue to be effective and aligned to the established needs of the child. The child (subject to age and understanding) will have contributed to and understand their plans.</p> <p>Continue to ensure that all managers understand their accountabilities in relation to assessments and monitor for</p>	Team Managers, managers from partner agencies, Social Workers, (HoS and Service Managers when necessary).	Immediate and ongoing.	<p>Children will recognize that they are able to contribute directly and influence assessments and plans.</p> <p>Children will receive consistently good services as a result of having high quality assessments and plans to which they have contributed which set out the</p>	<p>Formal consultation with children about their experiences of child in need and child protection planning and implementation.</p> <p>Dip sampling and when necessary, audit to check for compliance with requirements (including management oversight) and quality.</p> <p>Performance management reports will</p>	We have a permanent team of IROs and CP Chairs; they now actively send a postcard, by way of introduction, which is sent out to all children of an appropriate age allocated to them at the start of the CP process. These postcards detail who the IRO/CP chair is along with their contact details and a photograph of themselves. The objective here is to ensure children have free and open access to their IRO/CP chairs in relation to planning,

	<p>ensuring that plans are implemented and effective.</p> <p>Management oversight of child protection and children in need is effective and assures timely practice which affords the necessary levels of protection.</p>	<p>compliance and quality.</p> <p>Ensure that management oversight uses restorative principles to give timely and clear direction having evaluated the child's needs and circumstances, risks and progress with the current plan.</p> <p>CP chairs and managers (including managers from partner agencies) will monitor attendance at core group meetings and take action when necessary to ensure that plans are effective.</p> <p>Ensure that the capacity of the children's social care</p>			<p>requirements and timescales.</p> <p>Managers will make sure that all plans are implemented and take action when required.</p>	<p>detail compliance with timescales and establish that children have contributed.</p>	<p>participation and feeding back on reviews.</p> <p>The IRO Service has been enhanced by appointing a Service Manager who has taken the lead on improving children's participation. This includes closer working with the social work teams and also the advocacy service. The team has also been further enhanced by the addition of a CIN/IRO role, following concerns raised by the CCIB in relation to the quality and reduction in Child in Need visit compliance and review compliance, as well as the increase of children subject to CIN plans over a year. This</p>
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		service is deployed effectively to enable effective casework and management oversight.					<p>is evidencing positive outcomes.</p> <p>Audits across all areas of work are regularly carried out now with specific themes during each audit cycle. The findings of the audits are fed into learning forums such as the Practice Improvement Forum. A recent deep dive into children's files where the report for RCPC was out of the practice standard timescale has been undertaken.</p> <p>IRO service performance management meetings are now held on a monthly basis. The meetings revolve</p>
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							around targeting certain areas of the MPR and are fully minuted with actions going forward to review at the next performance meeting. The minutes are circulated to all the IROs and also the Divisional Director for regular oversight and feedback.
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Objective 2.3:

- Continue to ensure the effectiveness of Independent Reviewing Officers and Child Protection Chairpersons. Their work is recorded appropriately, and actions are evaluated for impact, reviewed routinely and cases are escalated when necessary).

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/ Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress
2.3.1	Child Protection Chairs will continue to have effective oversight of cases, challenge and	Child protection chairs will always be expected to be fully conversant with the details of the child's circumstances	Child Protection Chairs	Immediate and ongoing.	Children will benefit from the regular oversight and knowledge of	Children will be subject to child protection plans for as	Progress in this area of work has been hindered for many years due to the following issues: -

	<p>escalate where necessary. They monitor agreed actions to ensure implementation and evaluate impact on outcomes for children.</p>	<p>and their plan, always record concerns and the actions that are required. Actions are monitored according to required timescales.</p> <p>Child protection chairs will be expected to use the 'dispute resolution' process whenever they find poor practice or failure to implement the plan in full.</p> <p>Chairs and senior managers to actively review children who are subject to CP plans and ensure that the plan is effective and relevant to the circumstances of the child.</p> <p>Periodic dip samples are scheduled in the quality assurance timetable to ensure</p>			<p>Child Protection Chairs which will reduce the likelihood of them remaining in circumstances where they are likely to suffer significant harm.</p> <p>Where practice is of not good enough standard for children, improvements will be made using the dispute resolution process with the single goal of ensuring good or better outcomes for each child.</p>	<p>short a period as possible.</p> <p>Plans will demonstrably be fully implemented and achieve their outcomes in timescales suitable for the child.</p> <p>There will be a reduction in the numbers of children with second or further plans.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Excessive staff sickness. 2. An over-reliance on agency staff. <p>The above two factors combined have created a situation whereby consistency for children with having one Child Protection chair following their plan through to step-down has been negated and, in some cases, 'start again' processes arising with a new CP chair taking a different view on the CO planning progress. This inevitably results in children remaining on plans longer than necessary.</p>
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		<p>compliance with the actions set out above.</p> <p>Monthly reports to be reviewed by the Head of Service for QA & safeguarding.</p>					<p>Both the above-mentioned matters have now been fully addressed with the sickness issues being managed via the appropriate HR processes and individual workers either being managed out of the service or managed under absence review processes. The reliance on agency staff has been addressed with assertive recruitment to the historical vacant posts and, as previously stated, there is now a permanent team in place.</p> <p>It can be evidenced within the monthly performance which is submitted to the CCIB the positive trajectory of data evidencing clearly the impact for children of having timely ICPCs/RCPCs and</p>
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							relevant Core Group meetings.
2.3.2	Plans will continue to have sufficient focus to enable the progress of children to be measured and drift and delay to be avoided.	<p>Specific requirements for visiting frequency, the focus of the work to be undertaken and the need to incorporate the voice of the child in each assessment and plan will be made explicit.</p> <p>Recommendations of plans will be timed and measurable with accountability defined.</p>	Child Protection Chairs and Operational Managers.	Immediate and ongoing.	Children will benefit from prescribed and needs focused visits that will deliver their plan and ensure that their voices are heard and acted upon.	<p>Visiting frequencies will be within prescribed timescales.</p> <p>Records will demonstrably reflect the child's contributions and there will be clear evidence that their plans are implemented in full.</p>	<p>Practice standards (Ways of Working) have been revised, in line with the restorative model, and are clear about prescribed timescales as well as other expectations associated with every level of planning.</p> <p>Restorative planning workshops and Listening Circles form part of our feedback from the service are being implemented.</p> <p>A weekly meeting has been introduced between the HOS MASH, Front Door and Operational Services and HOS SARs, to monitor and oversee the</p>

							<p>progress of child protection plans, and to prevent drift and delay.</p> <p>The number of cared for children in the South West has increased in recent years, however Torbay has positively responded with an edge of care offer that has safely reduced the numbers of cared for children and continues on a downward trajectory, with significant year-on-year reductions since 2018-19.</p> <p>It has been acknowledged that the mandated changes to the NTS and the establishment of an asylum hotel in Torbay has impacted on our cared for numbers; this has been a focus in the CCIB and presentations in respect of this challenge has been an</p>
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							ongoing discussion as a partnership.
2.3.3	Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) will continue to contribute to continually improving practice through their challenges and escalations.	<p>IROs to support and influence best practice. They are required to use the formal 'dispute resolution' process to challenge poor decision making or drift and delay in developing or implementing children's care plans.</p> <p>IRO's to consistently track actions and oversee progress between reviews to ensure care planning is timely, child and young people focused, and works towards achieving permanence for children.</p> <p>IRO's to alert the Divisional Director about any placements in 'inadequate' provision or where the provider is failing to</p>	IROs	Immediate and ongoing.	<p>Children will benefit from focused intervention and robust care planning decisions to which they have contributed to support their long-term needs.</p> <p>Children will experience better quality services as a result of IROs challenging poor practice and supporting good standards.</p> <p>Decisions for children in relation to</p>	There will be an increase in alerts and more timely responses to these alerts	<p>An alert system is now in place whereby social workers receive a prompt at the 10-day stage that a report is due for a Cared For review. At the five-day point, the Heads of Services for Regulated and the Safeguarding Services are included in the alerts so assertive senior management action can be taken.</p> <p>Individual IROs have been tasked with forming links with teams across all of social care in order to deliver learning from reviews and how this should be taken forward to improve care planning.</p> <p>Post Covid, more IRO visits are being undertaken to children's</p>

		meet the agreed needs of the child.			permanency planning will be timely.		placements and any concerns reported back to the Heads of Service and the Divisional Director. 'Becoming Cared for Meeting' meetings are held for all children within seven days of becoming cared for to ensure all children have the right plans in places at the right time to inform their initial care plan.
Objective 2.4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The management and practice in relation to private fostering arrangements continues to identify children and provide a good or better service within the framework of legislation. 							
Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/ Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress
2.4.1	Partners, including language schools, should be cognisant of law and policy governing private	Provide training for all front-line staff on the legal framework about	HoS	July 2022.	Children who are privately fostered are safeguarded.	Privately fostered children will be identified and	Although a focus on private fostering and the duty to promote was positively responded to, this has not been as

	<p>fostering arrangements.</p> <p>Children receive timely visits, and the assessments are concluded which evidence the impact upon the child in living in a private fostering arrangement.</p>	<p>what constitutes a private fostered child.</p> <p>Review all privately fostered children who are known to children's social care and take immediate action to safeguard them when necessary.</p> <p>Review and revise the process of decision making in relation to privately fostered children and ensure that it is robust.</p>			<p>All privately fostered children will benefit from the implementation of the private fostering procedure.</p>	<p>appropriately safeguarded.</p> <p>Children will benefit from compliance with law and regulations.</p>	<p>widely publicised in the last six months and is an immediate action for the service.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that, during the summer months, the language schools undertook a number of activities promoting Torbay as an area for foreign student to travel to, however on examining the length of stays, these visits would not have fallen under the private fostering framework. The present data evidences a small number of privately fostered children and there is improvement in the statutory compliance relating to these children.</p>
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							It is important to note that, for one particular language school, there were potential safeguarding concerns, the LADO was actively involved in enduring children were not left in circumstances that were deemed to be unsafe. The Need-to-Know process was initiated, in order to notify relevant senior leaders.
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Objective 2.5:

- *Ensure that all looked after children need the care of the Local Authority and if so, they are helped to achieve security and permanence, as appropriate to their needs, through long term foster care, special guardianship or reunification within their timescales.*
- *Ensure that children looked after with a plan for permanence, understand their life story and the reasons why they cannot live with their birth families prior to preparation for a move.*

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/ Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress
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2.5.1	<p>For children who need to be cared for, decisions should be timely and only exercised once all other options, such as placement with wider family members have been exhausted.</p> <p>Whenever possible emergency placements are avoided.</p>	<p>Continue to identify children at the edge of care at the earliest opportunity following referral or through the children in need and child protection processes.</p> <p>Edge of care services (including the use of family group conferences) to be integrated and made available in planned and timely ways to all children vulnerable to breakdown in their living arrangements.</p> <p>Ensure that edge of care workers are clear in recognizing when children are insufficiently safe to remain at home.</p> <p>Ensure that children's plans are updated, and initial health</p>	Divisional Director & HoS	Immediate and ongoing.	<p>Children will feel safe, and their voice and that of their families will be heard in decision making forums.</p> <p>Children will experience concerted efforts to enable them to continue living safely with their families wherever possible.</p> <p>Children will be helped to understand that admission to care will only occur when necessary. Whenever possible it will be carried out in a planned way</p>	<p>Children will only be admitted to care when all other options have been considered.</p> <p>Placements will be available to children at the point of admission and unnecessary moves or prolonged stays in police stations will be avoided.</p> <p>Quarterly reporting from the edge of care panel on activity will evidence quality of decision making,</p>	<p>All audit activity considers the use of FGC and edge of care, at appropriate points in a child's plan. Recent benchmarking in respect of Court activity suggests that FGC is not embedded in the pre-proceedings process; this has led to a change in practice with FGC coordinators attending the initial PLO process and genograms being included in the initial PLO letter.</p> <p>Our audit activity evidences that for those children who need care, this is the right decision for them. Our adoption scorecard performance highlights the positive work being undertaken to achieve permanence for</p>
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		assessments are completed on time and management oversight prevents drift and delay.			for the shortest possible time. Children will benefit from increased placement stability as a consequence of good matching.		children at the earliest point. As part of an escalation of concern in relation to the use of police powers of protection, the Independent Scrutineer oversees audit activity relating to this and reports back his findings. It is unfortunate that due to the sufficiency challenges both locally and nationally, particularly when independent providers and agencies, that immediate is given which means that, for a small number of children, unregulated and unregistered is the only viable alternative. This is not a position we would
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							<p>want to be in, and we continue to provide Ofsted on a weekly basis the information relating to the children in unregistered settings as well as this being a standard item for the Quartet, in order to assure Members and the Chief Executive that these children are being adequately safeguarded to the best of our ability.</p> <p>Building Futures Together practice standards have been revised, with pathways of support including edge of care, reunification and placement stability; the team also plays a critical role in the youth homelessness response, in terms of re-visiting reunification at various</p>
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							<p>points during the child's journey.</p> <p>No decision for a child to become cared for is made without appropriate oversight from HOS and DD; this includes review of all alternative options, and additional support.</p> <p>Becoming Cared For meeting now introduced with agreed Terms of Reference; this ensures appropriate oversight at DD level of statutory requirements at the point of becoming cared for, as well as other aspects of the child's care plan.</p>
2.5.2	Children returning home from care receive sufficient support to enable	Continue to build on knowledge gained from 'what works' and 'what doesn't work'	Divisional Director and HoS	Immediate and ongoing.	Children will not return home unless it is demonstrably in	All children who return home will have a reunification	There are currently 24 children placed at home with their parents. This was an area of concern

	<p>them to live successfully in their communities with few returning to the care of the local authority.</p>	<p>evaluations so that evidence based best practice can be assured.</p> <p>Continue to use evidence-based practice learning to inform the sufficiency strategy and training and development opportunities for relevant members of the workforce. .</p> <p>Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) to continue to ensure that the statutory requirement to review all children’s care plans prior to reunification is implemented in every case.</p> <p>Reinforce to all front-line practitioners and team managers the requirement that any children returning home</p>			<p>their best interests, and they will be protected and safeguarded.</p> <p>Children will be supported to remain at home avoiding further episodes of care.</p> <p>IRO to have a better oversight of those children who are returning home and raise challenge using the escalation process if the support plan is not appropriate or implemented.</p>	<p>plan that is implemented in full and supports them to live within their families.</p> <p>The percentage of children re-entering care will reduce.</p>	<p>raised by the DCS in the Children’s Focus Meeting in September 2023, and a request for a specific paper to be submitted to the Children’s Focus Meeting was made, and this is due to be considered in the November 2023 meeting. In the event this raises partnership issues, a discussion will occur with the independent chair of the CCIB to consider whether the Board require further oversight.</p> <p>All children subject to Schedule 3 regulations are tracked and monitored through Permanence Panel on a monthly basis. This Panel ensures that appropriate support is in place to ensure the plan of reunification is safe and effective, and that</p>
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from care must have a revised contemporary assessment and support plan.

timely decisions are made in terms of presentation to Legal Gateway Panel with a view to entering into proceedings and seeking to discharge the Care Order.

The Court QA Manager maintains a Tracker of all Schedule 3 assessments to ensure timeliness, management oversight at HOS level and compliance, and appropriate review of these assessments at appropriate stages within a child's planning. As good practice, Schedule 3 assessments are also undertaken in circumstances whereby a child is placed at home under s38(6).

2.5.3	When it is anticipated that children require long term care, matching with carers should occur at the first opportunity so that they benefit from the stability and emotional security that this will offer them.	Take action to ensure that where long term fostering is the child's final plan, arrangements to secure the plan will be prioritised and any avoidable delays will be tackled immediately.	Divisional Director and HoS	Immediate and ongoing.	Children and young people will benefit from early decisions to secure matched long-term plans, and they have been involved in the decision-making process.	More children will benefit from matched long-term placements with foster carers, and they will understand the reasons that led to the decision. Increased security and stability will reduce placement disruption.	Of the 300 cared for children as of 31st October 2023, 68 are matched long term to their foster carers and 18 to their Connected Carers. This equates to 28% of the cohort. 25 (8%) children are placed in short term Connected Carer arrangements, pending the outcome of proceedings. 102 children (34%) are placed in short-term fostering placements. Long term matching is considered and reviewed through the Permanence Panel, with all children who have been in the same placement for eleven months being
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							<p>referred for long term match consideration.</p> <p>Once a match is ratified by the ADM, children receive a long-term match certificate and a personalised letter.</p>
<p>2.5.4</p> <p>Page 166</p>	<p>Fostering families will benefit from annual reviews and will be supported in their task by training and development opportunities.</p>	<p>National Minimum Standards will be complied with in full and annual reviews will identify the learning needs of fostering families that will be built into a personalised development plan</p>	<p>HoS Specialist Services.</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing.</p>	<p>Children and young people will be assured that foster carers' capabilities and capacities are understood and, where necessary, development needs are addressed.</p>	<p>Improved range of skilled and developed foster care provision as a result of carers' capabilities being fully understood.</p>	<p>This has been a particular focus of the service, which has resulted in consistently strong performance in relation not only to the compliance in terms of Annual Reviews but also in terms of DBS Checks, Medicals and TSD minimum training. As of October 2023, 93% of carers had benefitted from an up-to-date annual review.</p>

							Our fostering families are supported politically by the attendance of the Children's Lead Member at the Fostering Forum, who raises any concerns with the DCS that may arise from the Forum.
2.5.5	<p>Children continue to benefit from effective and timely life story and direct work that is undertaken by skilled workers.</p> <p>Life story work for children needs to start at the earliest opportunity so that children understand why they cannot live with their birth family.</p>	Permanence planning will always include timely requirements for life story and direct work that offers children the opportunity to be fully involved and contribute to their understanding of their life journeys.	Team Managers and Social Workers – HoS and Service Managers when necessary.	Immediate and ongoing.	Children will have a comprehensive understanding (commensurate with age) about the reasons for them living away from their birth families and why they need to live in permanent arrangements. They will have experienced opportunities to contribute to relevant discussions throughout the process.	<p>Better bonding with their permanent carers.</p> <p>Fewer placement disruptions.</p> <p>Children will develop better attachment capabilities and greater confidence.</p>	Torbay continues to recognise the impact of high-quality life story work for children and young people. We have developed JIGSAW: Torbay's Life Story Work Strategy, which outlines the overarching concept, that every Torbay child has the right to learn about their history and ask questions about their care experiences. The Strategy outlines the distinction between life story books and life story work, principles for practitioners to consider when undertaking this

							<p>work and tools to use when doing so.</p> <p>Audit activity continues to evidence and highlight the quality of direct work with children and young people.</p> <p>As of October 2023, 65% of children adopted in the last twelve months had a completed life story book; the same percentage of children had a completed later life letter. This is tracked and overseen by the monthly performance report. This is an area for development; however, we have seen improvement in this performance from a legacy position during the pandemic, whereby</p>
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							the external commissioned service undertaking this work on Torbay's behalf ceased to function.
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Theme 3 – Effective Partnership Practice

Objective 3.1:

Page 169

- *Early Help services provide timely and appropriate help to children and their families which prevents escalation (or re-referral) to statutory services.*
- *Life chances for children will be supported by early intervention, with a particular focus upon their holistic health needs.*
- *Ensure that responses to children who go missing continue to be coordinated and effective in locating them and offering prioritised post episode support so that their needs can be fully understood. Interventions with children, disruption activity with persons of concern and at particular 'Hot-Spots' are properly targeted.*
- *To continue to build upon the increasingly effective arrangements in relation to MARAC and MAPPA.*
- *Ensure that all 16- and 17-year-olds who present as homeless are assessed by social workers and that they are aware of the options open to them, including the option to become looked after.*
- *Ensure all care experienced young people in temporary accommodation achieve accommodation security.*
- *All cared for and care experienced young people benefit from appropriate educational support, particularly literacy support to enable them to participate and benefit from learning.*

- *Ensure that all young people who will transition to adult services will benefit from appropriate personal support through the process.*
- *To develop and deliver a revised Youth Strategy which reflects the identified needs of young people.*

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/ Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress
3.1.1 Page 170	The Council and its partners as a whole have an agreed understanding, vision and joined up approach to Early Help which supports the improvement priorities and prevents avoidable escalation to statutory services. Wherever possible services will be accessible to families through the network of	To complete the implementation in full of the Early Help Strategy and ensure that the Family Hub Project Board and Family Hubs are properly focussed on developing a Child Friendly Torbay.	Family Hubs Project Board and partners	Immediate and ongoing.	Children and families will benefit from a rigorous multi-disciplinary approach to Early Help which will enable them to access appropriate and local services in a timely way and at a level which meets their needs.	To monitor and evaluate data relating to uptake of Early Help, successful completion of early help interventions, rates of escalations to statutory services and rates of step down to Early Help.	Implementation of the Family Hubs has enabled an enhanced link between early help and prevention, and the 0-19 services under public health, providing a seamless early intervention and prevention offer which ensures children and their families have the right support at the earliest opportunity.

	community-based Family Hubs.					The impact of Family and Community Hubs will assure significant knowledge of local services that can be drawn upon by families.	This model was validated by Ofsted during the Start for Life thematic review, who observed seamless service delivery. The implementation of the Family Hub has coincided with a reduction in the number of children being supported at Child in Need level, particularly over the last three months. This is due to the impact of services, which focus on connection, relationships and access, at the universal level.
3.1.2	In conjunction with health and public health partners, identify the resources available and gaps in provision and take steps to jointly commission those services required to meet the emotional	Use existing and new community resources to work with children and their families to promote and secure their emotional well-being.	Head of Service, Early Help, Early help Hubs, Health and Public Health professionals in conjunction with families and children	December 2022	Children and young people with emotional health challenges and low-level mental health concerns will benefit from early support	Early identification and effective support will impact upon escalation rates and will enable timely referral and access to	The emotional and mental health needs of cared for children and care experienced young people continues to be a significant focus for Torbay. The care planning meeting structure promotes a child and young person led

	<p>well-being needs of children throughout their childhood and, where relevant, up to 25 years of age.</p>				<p>from within their communities.</p>	<p>specialist services when necessary.</p>	<p>exploration of what additional services might be required for children and young people, to meet their therapeutic, emotional or mental wellbeing needs.</p> <p>An Emotional Wellbeing sub-group has been established as part of Torbay's Written Statement of Action response, led by the ICB.</p> <p>The s75 arrangement, including the service specification for the Therapeutic Wellbeing Service, is currently under review.</p> <p>A request has been made by the Children's Overview</p>
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							and Scrutiny Board for an exceptional and additional spotlight Board on children's emotional and mental health; this will be attended by both Children's and partners in December 2023.
3.1.3	Adopt a preventive and supportive approach to improve children and young people's speech, language and communication.	Effectively use resources to identify early children who will benefit from early intervention to offer the best start and improve life chances for children and young people.	Hannah Pugliese (tbc), Shaun Evans, SALT and Early Years services.	September 2022 to coincide with the new school year.	Children and young people and their families will benefit from the confidence that improvements in speech, language and communication bring.	Children will be better equipped and more confident to participate in social and learning environments.	Work is being undertaken as part of the TSCP neglect group and the Exeter TMRF to examine the links between poverty and neglect with speech and language being one of the key elements within this work – particular lines of enquiry are the links between high levels of child tooth decay in the area and early speech and language problems. A programme of preventative work is being devised with a view to delivering educational and best start to life programmes via the family hub network.

							Other work being explored is an enhanced early years educational offer to create 'home learning environments' HLEs. In essence HLEs will be best start for life programmes linking parents to nurseries at the child's conception stage and supporting parents/children with their education to firstly get them nursery ready and secondly get them school ready. Again, these early identification and early intervention programmes will form key elements delivered from the family hubs and provide an extension to the 'Torbay Promise' that is now fully launch.
3.1.4	Ensure improvements in mental health and care services for	Improve access and the quality of services provided by CAMHS, crisis services and	Hannah Pugliese	Immediate and ongoing	Children and young people will benefit from more	Children and young people's mental health will be	As outlined in 3.1.2, a significant schedule of work is ongoing to ensure that the emotional and mental health of children

	children and young people.	eating disorders/disordered eating services.			timely and improved specialist services when they experience significant mental ill health.	improved through having better and more timely access to the specialist services that they need.	and young people remains a priority, and that a range of appropriate services are in place to meet need.
3.1.5	Ensure an integrated response across health, education and care services to meet the neurodiverse needs of children and young people.	Strengthen the quality of integrated services to identify and meet need at the point of presentation. Strengthen the focus of emotional and behavioural support to prevent escalation and crisis, and support transition to young adulthood. Work to maintain children within their families and communities when it is safe to do so and support and facilitate their recovery.	Hannah Pugliese, Shaun Evans and Rachael Williams.	Integrated approaches to be developed and implemented by December 2022	Neurodiversity among children and young people will be identified early, and better supported in timely ways within their families and communities to prevent escalation.	Children and young people will benefit from early identification of their neurodiverse needs and will experience more effective, integrated services provided by skilled and knowledgeable health, education and social care professionals.	Through the graduated response Written Statement of Action sub-groups the current pathways and provision are being mapped for children who present with need relating to their neurodiversity. This will help to create an articulated pathway of care, specific information for SENCOs and children and families and an analysis of gaps in the system. Alongside this we are increasing the number of key workers who will support children and

						Episodes of crisis will reduce in number.	young people at an earlier stage of need and will not require a diagnostic process to have completed in order to access this provision. We are also working to integrate the pathways for referral and diagnosis across community paediatrics, CAMHS and therapies.
1.6 Page 176	<p>Ensure that responses to children who go missing are effective with well-coordinated multi-disciplinary plans and actions to reduce risk.</p> <p>Return home interviews to be completed within statutory timescales in order that children's voice can be heard at the earliest opportunity and</p>	<p>Ensure that policies and procedures are implemented in full and within timescales.</p> <p>Maintain the system to track and monitor those children who are vulnerable to repeated missing episodes and ensure a comprehensive process involving partners is in place to oversee actions that are taken</p>	Divisional Director & HoS	Immediate and ongoing.	<p>Children will receive a return home interview within 72 hours of being found.</p> <p>For those children vulnerable to prolific missing episodes, multi-disciplinary disruption plans to be</p>	<p>A reduction in the numbers of repeat missing episodes.</p> <p>The reasons for the missing episode will be understood, multi-disciplinary actions will be planned and implemented</p>	<p>Torbay has an exploitation toolkit which is embedded and used by professionals across the Torbay Children's Safeguarding partnership when there are concerns for any type of exploitation.</p> <p>Torbay has three distinct operational/practice forums for multi-agency discussion about any child where there are contextual safeguarding concerns. These are embedded and</p>

	<p>effective responses can be made.</p>	<p>to afford the necessary safeguards.</p> <p>Maintain and when necessary, revise the contemporary multi-disciplinary tracking systems to protect vulnerable children by building intelligence about them, their potential perpetrators and geographical locations of interest, 'hot-spots'.</p>			<p>developed and implemented.</p> <p>Children will experience agencies working together effectively and consistently to understand the patterns and trends associated with their missing episodes. They will support prevention and disruptions activity that will reduce their vulnerabilities.</p>	<p>to support the child.</p>	<p>were well regarded by our Ofsted inspection.</p> <p>We have internal and commissioned services to responding to children where contextual harm is a concern and are in the process of considering how these services can be working together to deliver evidence based, focused interventions for children and their families regarding contextual safeguarding.</p> <p>There is identified development work to be completed with our Child Protection Conference Chairs/IROs, and we are in the process of identifying Practice Leads for training and supporting others to embrace the theories and principles of Contextual Safeguarding.</p> <p>The TSCP have identified that there needs to be a</p>
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							<p>task and finish group considering a model of contextual safeguarding; this will commence from the end of 2023 and throughout 2024, with feedback through to the TSCP Executive Group and Children’s Overview and scrutiny and the CCIB if required.</p> <p>The TSCP undertook a Multi-Agency Case Audit (MACA) in relation to child criminal exploitation in October 2023.</p>
1.7	Partners should ensure that children vulnerable to sexual exploitation are identified and in accordance with policy referred for appropriate support, assessment with consideration being given to the possibility	<p>Continue to support the role and function of the CSE coordinator in alignment with statutory functions.</p> <p>Continue to ensure that members of MACSE are sufficiently experienced and knowledgeable to</p>	Divisional Director & HoS	Immediate and ongoing.	Children who are vulnerable to being targeted or who are already involved in CSE will have a multi-disciplinary care plan that identifies how these	The effective use of intelligence and professional knowledge and skill will continue to identify vulnerable children and persons who pose a risk,	As above.

	<p>of association with gang related activity.</p> <p>MACSE meetings to be effective in reducing risk to the most vulnerable children by planning effective interventions.</p>	<p>contribute fully to plans for children.</p> <p>Periodic quality assurance activity to evaluate the effectiveness of work with children vulnerable to go missing and exploitation.</p>			<p>vulnerabilities will be addressed and reduced.</p> <p>Children will benefit from better protection as social workers and partners will understand the vulnerabilities relating to CSE and the associated risks to children.</p>	<p>and 'hot-spots'.</p>	
3.1.8	<p>To re-establish the importance of MARAC arrangements in the management of children living in households in which</p>	<p>All staff attending MARAC meetings will be fully cognisant of the contemporary and historical circumstances of the child so that the</p>	<p>Operational Managers and Social Workers</p>	<p>Immediate and ongoing.</p>	<p>Children will benefit from a process that will properly explore the impact of</p>	<p>Children will be better protected from the impact of domestic abuse and</p>	<p>A Chief Executive Deep Dive activity took place in November 2021; the recommendations from this deep dive are tracked through the Deep Dive</p>

	<p>domestic abuse is present.</p>	<p>meeting can properly understand the risks to which he/she is exposed.</p>			<p>domestic abuse on their family and assess how it is affecting their daily lives and prospects for their futures.</p>	<p>victims will be helped and supported to make the necessary changes in their lives.</p>	<p>Tracker, with oversight from the Children's Quartet.</p> <p>MARAC meetings are attended by the appropriate officer on all occasion, to ensure that risk can be fully understood and appropriately responded to within each meeting.</p> <p>A MARAC PowerBI Dashboard is now included in the suite of Children's dashboards. This provides an overview in relation to number of referrals, referral type, referral outcome and threshold, and also breaks data down in terms of referring agency. This is impactful in terms of the wider understanding of the impact of domestic abuse on Torbay's children and their families.</p>
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3.1.9	To advocate on behalf of care experienced children and young people for the Council's Housing Strategy and delivery plan to be revised to make explicit reference to actions being taken to respond to young people's needs for accommodation security.	To provide data and information to inform revision to the Housing Strategy and delivery plan and enable specific reference to be made to the housing needs of care experienced young people. Ensure that young people moving towards independence have timely access to a housing advisor for advice, guidance and support.	DCS, Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board and Housing.	October 2022	Torbay's Housing Strategy and delivery plan will reflect its statutory role, responsibility and function in relation to Corporate Parenting. Young People will benefit from the advice, guidance and support of a professional with specialist knowledge.	Increased prospects for care experienced young people to achieve secure tenancies matched to their needs and a consequential reduction in homelessness and reliance upon temporary and unsuitable accommodation.	Torbay's Housing Strategy has now been revised, and this reflects the corporate parenting responsibility to care experienced young people. Accommodation for care experienced young people is a regular item on the Corporate Parenting Board, and has its own Strand Lead and meeting structure, to oversee activity and action relating to this priority. The block contract for support accommodation remains in place, providing 48 units with no current vacancies within the core Lot 2 options. The most significant challenge remains access for care experienced
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							<p>young people to move on accommodation, generic housing stock as opposed to specialist accommodation. All care experienced young people who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness, from the ages of 18-25, are also tracked through the Youth Homelessness Prevention Panel; currently, 20 care experienced young people are being tracked this way, a reduction from an average of above 40 throughout 2021-22.</p> <p>Joint work between Children's and Housing has continued on the SHAP bid in partnership with the YMCA to provide an additional 34 units for young people. The final bid is due to be submitted</p>
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							on the 11 th of November 2023.
3.1.10	All young people who become homeless are assessed and are made fully aware of their right to be cared for by the Local Authority	All 16/17-year-olds who are at risk of homelessness or are homeless will be fully assessed and supported in accordance with the youth homelessness policy and this will involve cross partnership colleagues. Young people will be advised about their rights (including those relating to admissions to care) and their progress will be monitored and evaluated. Council wide, strategic alternatives to homelessness need to be considered for young people aged 16-25.	HoS, Team Managers, Social Workers and partnership colleagues including youth homelessness workers.	Immediate and ongoing.	All homeless 16/17-year-olds will be aware of their statutory right to be accommodated. Young people at risk of becoming homeless will reduce. Homeless young people will have a personalised plan which will be monitored to ensure that they are properly safeguarded.	Young people will be aware of their rights and will continue to be offered suitable living arrangements, and safeguarding services should they become homeless, or care.	An advocacy service is now in place and the joint CSC/Housing protocol has been updated to reflect a position that bed and breakfast accommodation for 16/17-year-olds is not an option along with clear processes and procedures to assess as well as support young people to make the right decision about the legal status of their accommodation provision, i.e., under children's legislation and housing legislation. Torbay has recommissioned housing related support with block contracts for young people aged 16-24 and care experienced young people with 48 bed spaces. For those organisations that are supporting 16–17-year-olds, Torbay are

							supporting the Ofsted registration process where applicable.
3.1.11	Ensure that all care experienced young people who are living in temporary housing arrangements are supported to achieve accommodation security at the earliest opportunity.	<p>In conjunction with the housing service, young people should benefit from frequent visits and advice about the options available to them to achieve accommodation security.</p> <p>To develop a business plan to secure dedicated housing for care experienced young people consistent with statutory responsibility and case law.</p>	<p>Head of Service, Regulated Services, Personal Advisors and Housing Advisors</p> <p>Directors of Children's Services, Place and Adults</p>	Immediate and ongoing	Young people will benefit afforded by the security of living arrangements which they can call home.	<p>Young people's psychological health and their ability to live successfully as a young adult will improve as a consequence of securing accommodation.</p>	<p>Temporary Accommodation and Youth Homelessness is on the corporate risk register for scrutiny, commitment and oversight.</p> <p>The Corporate Parenting Board has strand leads to champion areas of priority, with a dedicated lead for Housing.</p> <p>A revised Housing Strategy has been completed and has been through its governance process.</p> <p>The DFE are funding 1.5fte specialist PAs to work intensively with care experience young people at risk of homelessness.</p> <p>A virtual team has been set up to meet quarterly to discuss the most complex</p>

							<p>care experienced young people whose needs often impact on their ability to maintain housing which in turn results in multiple homelessness episodes throughout their early 20s.</p> <p>Work continues with BetterGov to develop and improve data join up and reporting across Housing and Children's Services.</p>
<p>3.1.12</p> <p>Page 185</p>	<p>Ensure that all cared for children and care experienced young people are supported in education and where necessary particular focus is directed toward literacy skills, particularly reading which should be explicit in all PEPs and Pathway Plans.</p>	<p>In preparation for completing PEPs and Pathway Plans all cared for and care experienced children and young people should have an up-to-date evaluation of their literacy with specialist additional help offered when necessary.</p>	<p>Head of Virtual School and education and skills representatives, social workers and Personal Advisors</p>	<p>Immediate and on-going</p>	<p>All cared for children and care experienced young people will benefit from the provision of the support necessary to secure their reading skills so that they may learn confidently and successfully.</p>	<p>Children and young people will be better equipped to learn and benefit from their education and, later, be ready to take their place in the workforce.</p>	<p>A Chief Executive Deep Dive activity in relation to the PEP process was undertaken in August 2023. The review found a high level of compliance with PEPs, with 82% of cared for children at that time having a PEP.</p> <p>Areas of improvement included a review of the PEP template, alignment of Capita and LCS to ensure appropriate two-way communication with the Virtual School in</p>

							support of statutory responsibility and ensure the appropriate range of representatives are invited to and engaged in the PEP process.
3.1.13	To ensure that all young people who will transition to adult services benefit from early plans which are co-produced in conjunction with their social care workers and with the involvement of a link worker to adult services.	Review and if necessary, revise the Transition Policy to ensure that co-produced plans are required to be completed early (by the young person's 16 th birthday) and informed by the specialist input of an adult's services professional who will remain the link person throughout the young person's transitions period.	Head of Service, regulated services, Sarah Pengelly, Adults Services	December 2022	Young people will be helped to prepare for the transition from children's services and benefit from the seamless transfer of service responsibility.	Young people will benefit psychologically from a seamless transfer between services and through the support and knowledge of an adult services professional, will be aware of the resources that are available currently and in the future.	All children and young people from the ages of fourteen to seventeen who are cared for, open to the Children with Disabilities, subject to child protection planning, subject to an NRM referral, subject to a red exploitation assessment or who are at risk of youth homelessness can be referred to the Transitions (with all cared for and young people supported within the Children with Disabilities Team automatically heard within this Panel); a referral form has been created which enables social workers to refer young people for Panel oversight. The Transition Panel oversees transition

							<p>planning in respect of the following key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Current placements and support packages.- Transition planning and joint work with adult services.- Issues in relation to liberty protection safeguards and restrictive measures if identified.- Joint work between the allocated social worker and Personal Advisor where appropriate.- Preparation for independence work. <p>The Panel also serves as a means of consistent managerial oversight in respect of the allocation of Personal Advisors at fifteen years and nine months. This is to allow for a Personal Advisor to be</p>
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							<p>co-allocated, and for relationship-building and information gathering to take place at a much earlier point than it has historically, to aid the transition of the young person from cared for to care experienced.</p> <p>The Panel also allows for tracking of parent/carer need during transition.</p> <p>The Joint Protocol between Children's and adults has been updated, to allow for consultation with young people as part of this revision. A young people's guide to transition has also been created, to support young people's understanding of this process and their rights within it.</p>
3.1.14	In the context of a 'Child Friendly Torbay', review and refresh understanding of youth need taking into account	<p>Action:</p> <p>1. Identify a task and finish group of strategic and operational managers and</p>	Divisional Director, Partnership and Family Hubs	March 2024	1. Children and young people will have timely access to a range of targeted	Children and young people will be safer and better informed to make life	The youth provision which was previously commissioned to an external agency has now been brought back in-house and a dedicated

	<p>anticipated new statutory responsibilities using gap analysis when required, and scope what services are required to be commissioned to meet that need.</p>	<p>commissioners to co-ordinate the review and to undertake the gap analysis.</p> <p>2.To develop a strategy reflecting local understanding and intelligence but factoring in national and international learning.</p> <p>3.Propose a delivery plan setting out options and priority recommendations including costings wherever possible.</p>			<p>services, relevant to their needs.</p> <p>2.Children will benefit from universal and specialist services to be delivered in suitable geographical locations as close to their communities as possible.</p>	<p>choices as a result of having needs-relevant services available to them.</p>	<p>manager has started to consider the delivery model required in Torbay for our young people. This sits within the Partnership and Family Hubs directorate, and is aligned to the Vulnerable Pupils, in order that we can target engagement in respect of those young people at risk of suspension, exclusion, exploitation or who are school anxious/avoidant.</p> <p>We will be in a position by March 2024 to have a strategic delivery plan which will set out our model in Torbay.</p>
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Theme 4 – A Sufficient and Skilled Workforce

Objective 4.1:

- *Ensure that the workforce strategy is effective in securing a skilled and permanent workforce and focusses upon workforce training and development, recruitment and retention.*

- Senior managers and leaders must take action to create an environment in which their staff have the capacity and support to carry out effective work with children in need of help and protection.

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress
4.1.1	<p>An effective workforce strategy ensures a qualified and skilled permanent workforce that reduces reliance on agency staff.</p> <p>Training and development opportunities and succession planning combine to support retention and promote Torbay as an employment destination of choice.</p>	<p>To maintain a focus on aligning training and development with the needs of children.</p> <p>Continue to use agency staff only when essential for the smooth running of the service.</p> <p>As part of the workforce strategy, a systematic approach to recruitment should be adopted and all leaders and managers should be focussed upon positive retention activity.</p>	DCS in conjunction with Head of Service Learning Academy and operational managers.	Immediate and ongoing.	<p>Children will have fewer changes of social worker.</p> <p>Children will experience social workers who are knowledgeable and skilled.</p> <p>Children will benefit from a proactive approach to recruitment and retention that will reduce staff turnover.</p>	<p>Greater staff stability.</p> <p>Improvements to the quality of service provided to children.</p> <p>Stable long-term relationships with social workers.</p> <p>Torbay becomes a destination of choice for skilled</p>	<p>Succession planning for Senior Leadership is complete. The Divisional Director group and all bar one Head of Service are now permanent. The Service Managers roles are all permanently filled.</p> <p>The Divisional Directors, front line Heads of Service and Service Managers receive bespoke coaching and development programme.</p> <p>The Team Manager development programme commenced September 2022.</p> <p>Leadership and Development workshops</p>

		The succession plan introduced to support career progression and retention should be at least maintained and when possible extended.			Children will benefit from professionals furthering their careers progression in Torbay.	managers and practitioners.	<p>have been delivered to all Advanced Social Workers and Team Managers from winter 2022.</p> <p>Impact on recruitment data 01/10/2023:</p> <p>Vacancy Rate Social Care 12%</p> <p>Agency Rate 6.0%</p> <p>Turnover Rate:</p> <p>Sept 20 26%</p> <p>Sept 21 16%</p> <p>Sept 22 15.8%</p> <p>October 23 14.6%</p> <p>Current forecast cost reduction on agency spends in 2022/23 £2.2 million from previous years at £4.4 million.</p>
4.1.2	The training and development strategy continues to reflect the needs of the service and	The workforce training and development plan remains focussed upon a mixture of core and	Head of Service Learning Academy.	Immediate and ongoing.	Children will continue to experience good or better	Children will benefit from work that is	Learning from quality assurance tracker continues. Ofsted March 2022 commented that we

	<p>workforce and is based on an analysis of developmental needs and the requirements of the children.</p> <p>Opportunities should be taken to develop joint training initiatives with other agencies and professional groups to enable effective multi-disciplinary practice in shared initiatives.</p>	<p>bespoke opportunities to maximise the skills of the workforce and equip them to meet the changing needs of children. These opportunities should include joint training with partners.</p> <p>The social care workforce will be offered training and development opportunities commensurate with service priorities developed to meet the needs of children.</p> <p>Opportunities should be offered to learn from national research and understanding of national recognised best practice.</p>			<p>services delivered by a stable, skilled and motivated workforce which will be multi-disciplinary when necessary.</p> <p>The impact of training and development is understood.</p>	<p>better planned and delivered.</p> <p>Their social workers will develop a greater range of skills and techniques that can be used according to need and in combination with partners when required</p>	<p>had a robust process in place to ensure training is relevant to the needs of the service and children.</p> <p>Process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning needs identified from quality assurance. 2. Training delivered. 3. Re-audit undertaken to monitor impact on services to children. 4. Actions identified from re-audit undertaken. 5. Process starts again. <p>Training delivered jointly with partner agencies – Learning Academy has strong links with Torbay</p>
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							Safeguarding Children's Partnership and SEND local offer. Examples: Graded Care Profile 2, Restorative Practice, Best Practice Forums, Autism Awareness. Evaluations will be undertaken of the above training to measure direct impact on children.
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Theme 5 – Quality Assurance and Audit

Objective 5.1:

Page 1

- *Ensure that performance and quality assurance activity supports best practice and learning is used to further develop the workforce and to improve practice and management across the service and where possible across the partnership.*

Ref No.	Desired Outcome for Children	Actions	Lead	Timescale/Date	What difference will it make to children (impact)	How will we measure the difference to children?	Evidence of Progress
5.1.1	The outcome focused quality assurance framework will continue to provide a programme of robust, child centred case file audits (including multi-disciplinary audits)	An annual programme of outcome focused audit activity, including deep dive and thematic audits and dip sampling will be targeted systematically to	HoS Learning Academy.	Annual audit programme updated by 1 st April each year.	Children will benefit from having a systematic effectiveness, impact and compliance	Improved compliance with requirements, a greater focus on outcomes and improved	Audit Universe broad scope of topics and themes. Three monthly rolling audit cycle: Month 1 Mash and SATs, Month 2 Operational and Child

	<p>that will evaluate the impact of work to support performance management. It will also capture learning from complaints and compliments.</p> <p>Follow up systems will be in place to ensure that actions required following audit and complaint and compliment analysis are completed.</p> <p>The Chief Executive and Chair of the Continuous Improvement Board will continue to assure the effectiveness of the Children's Continuous Improvement Plan through a programme of 'Deep Dive' evaluations of service impact.</p>	<p>measure the effectiveness and impact of the improvement programme and the benefits to, and outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>To maintain a programme of deep dive audit activity undertaken by CEO and the Chair of the Children's Continuous Improvement Board to ensure the impact of improvement priorities in practice.</p> <p>Marinating a pool of trained auditors and moderators to include senior managers who are effective in evaluating the quality of work undertaken and its impacts.</p>			<p>check on services that are provided to them.</p> <p>Children will benefit from the additional quality assurance provided by the CEO and Chair of the Children's Continuous Improvement Board that will establish the impact of improvement priorities.</p> <p>Children will benefit from the knowledge that audit and dip sample recommendations will be followed up to ensure that the</p>	<p>quality assessment, planning and intervention which reflects the needs and views of children.</p> <p>Improved performance data across the range of measures.</p>	<p>Exploitation 2 Care for and Care Experienced.</p> <p>Head of Service QA meets with relevant Heads of Service to identify areas of focus for each month. This is triangulated with the performance data.</p> <p>Actions from audits tracked on LCS via the Team Manager which is dip sampled for compliance. Dip Sample actions are tracked by Lead Auditor. Complaints and complaints fed in by governance which are included in the quarterly audit reports.</p>
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		<p>Maintain the process of tracking audit outcomes and recommendations to ensure that individual experiences of services are improved for children and young people and learning from audits is captured and supports policy and practice development.</p>			<p>required action has been taken.</p>	<p>The three-monthly cycle enables impact on children’s lived experience to be monitored by service area.</p> <p>From October 2022, children and young people and Parents/carers feedback will be gathered by auditors from October 2022 which will evidence direct impact on the child and family.</p> <p>Multi-agency audits: Lead auditor supports MASH dip sampling. HOS QA links in with Torbay Safeguarding Partnership QA sub-group. Auditing will commence October</p>
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							<p>2022 across the SEND Area and Early Help.</p> <p>Deep Dives – Deep Dive actions are tracked and updated monthly via Children’s Social Care Senior Leadership Team and monitored via Quartet. Deep Dive visits completed for this year. Will plan dip samples to measure impact on outcomes for children.</p>
5.1.2	Continue to ensure a consistent approach to the use of performance data which captures qualitative and quantitative material so that it supports evaluation of outcomes for children.	Opportunities to be taken to assure the quality and range of performance management and data reporting that is available through LiquidLogic.	DCS	Immediate and ongoing.	Children will benefit from the ability of managers and staff to be able to monitor their work. This will enable individual, team	Child level data enables a focus on individual children to drive performance improvement,	<p>A consistent and robust process remains in place in relation to performance.</p> <p>The monthly performance report is</p>

	<p>Performance surgeries are used to monitor progress with improvement objectives.</p>	<p>Performance surgeries to continue on a monthly basis. The data will be at child level.</p>			<p>and service performance to be identified and action taken to respond to pressures and concerns.</p>	<p>Team and service performance will maintain continuous improvement.</p>	<p>completed within ten working days of the 1st of the month; this is then quality assured by both the HOS Business Intelligence and then the Divisional Director of Safeguarding, who extracts initial headline themes in terms of data analysis. Once endorsed by the DCS, this is shared with all Children's leaders to use within the performance surgery structure.</p> <p>Performance surgeries take place on a monthly basis by service; minutes from these meetings are then shared with the HOS Business Intelligence and the HOS QA for collation and analysis</p>
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							<p>of emerging trends and patterns.</p> <p>A data exception report is compiled by the Divisional Director of Safeguarding and the DD Schools and SEND; this is a core agenda item on the Children's Continuous Improvement Board, the Children's Focus Meeting and the Quartet. The exception report highlights partnership issues, to ensure line of sight for the Independent Scrutineer.</p> <p>The service now has access to a wide range of PowerBI data dashboards, which allows for live and up to</p>
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								date data analysis within each service.
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Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board Action Tracker

Date of meeting	Minute No.	Action	Comments
23/10/23	11	That the revised Membership of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board as set out in the submitted document be approved.	Complete - Terms of Reference update in the Council's Constitution.
23/10/23	12	<p>That the Cabinet be recommended:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. that priority be given to setting up a mentoring group or safe space for young men in Torbay; 2. that priority be given in the Kings Ash Ward to work with the community and voluntary sector and other agencies to help families and young people to reduce anti-social behaviour; and 3. that Ward Councillors be kept informed of the activities taking place within their Wards to support young people and to reduce anti-social behaviour so that they can help communicate this. 	Complete – Cabinet approved the attached report at their meeting on 5 December 2023
23/10/23	12	Tanny Stobart provided a brief overview of work Play Torbay was engaged with in the Kings Ash Ward and agreed to provide a written update to all Members to keep them informed of this work.	Complete – written update circulated to the Board 16.1.24

Date of meeting	Minute No.	Action	Comments
23/10/23	13	That the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board formally welcome Cornwall and Isles of Scilly to Adopt South West Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) and that an update on the impact of Cornwall and Isles of Scilly joining the RAA be provided when the next annual report is presented in 2024.	Complete – added to Work Programme for 2024/2025
23/10/23	14	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. that an update be provided to a future meeting of the Sub-Board from the new SEND Governance Executive on progress of SEND moving forward, including the progress made towards a shared approach across the county; and <li>2. to seek reassurance from NHS Devon (Integrated Care Board), via a written report to be submitted to the meeting of the Sub-Board on 18 December 2023, on the progress made in respect of the level of contributions from health towards Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and issues with waiting lists. 	<p>Complete added to Work Programme</p> <p>The Director of Children's Services advised that formal negotiations were taking place with the ICO with a view to coming to an agreed position on this matter.</p>
23/10/23	15	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. that the Director of Children's Services be requested review the Work Programme and check that the responsible officer is correct and the Clerk has invited them to the relevant meeting; and 	Complete

Date of meeting	Minute No.	Action	Comments
		2. that a written update on housing for care experienced young people be provided to the Sub-Board once the work identified in Minute 15/10/23 has been completed.	Complete added to Work Programme
7/12/23	17	An updated document will be circulated prior to the meeting.	An updated document will be circulated prior to the meeting.
18/12/23	20	<p>1. that the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board notes the contents of the submitted report;</p> <p>2. that the Director of Children's Services be requested to work with the Head of the Youth Justice Service to see how they can work more closely with other partner services, the community and voluntary sector at an earlier stage to help young people integrate into community services and help the Youth Justice Service to balance their capacity to deliver preventative and statutory services to reduce youth offending; and</p> <p>3. that the Director of Children's Services be requested to write out to the statutory partners for youth justice to see if there is any suitable accommodation for youth justice work in Torquay, Paignton and Brixham.</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete - The YJS are working with the following partners to support a collaborative and cohesive response to the needs of the children who are supported by the YJS:</p> <p>Sound Communities Checkpoint / The Childrens Society Chill'd Out Youth Centre Reach Outdoors Grenville House Foxhole Community Centre Youth Group Play Torbay Youth Club at Windmill Centre</p> <p>There will be some other sports and activity clubs that we will be supporting children to attend as part of positive activities going forward and a close working relationship with the establishment of the Youth Hubs as part of the family hubs development.</p>

Date of meeting	Minute No.	Action	Comments
			Complete - The letter has been agreed and sent and the accommodation issue is an agenda item on the next YJS strategic board.
18/12/23	21	<p>1. that the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board notes the recommendations to the Children's Continuous Improvement Board as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Recognises the challenges in the local area and the ongoing work. ii. Promotes school inclusion across all council activity to secure better outcomes for children, families and the community. iii. Has a regard to children and young people's sense of belonging when making decisions. <p>2. that a training session be provided to Councillors who are school governors or who wish to be school governors on exclusions and suspensions and their roles and what the schools should be doing.</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete - The Head of Vulnerable pupils and virtual school head has requested support via Governance Support to arrange a session on the 6.3.2024. the following has been requested to be sent to all Cllrs.</p> <p>Torbay faces some particular difficulties regarding the level of exclusions and suspensions from schools.</p>

Date of meeting	Minute No.	Action	Comments
		(Note: after consideration of the item in Minute 21, Councillor Fellows left the meeting which resulted in the meeting not being quorate in accordance with Standing Order B3. In accordance with Standing Order B3.2 the remaining items would be included on the agenda for the next meeting for Members of the Sub-Board to formally note their content.)	<p>Children's Services would like to offer an online training session on Wednesday 6th March for all members who are, or may consider in the future being, school governors or trustees.</p> <p>The session will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of school governors in respect of exclusion and suspension from school. • The data relating to Torbay children and schools. • The impact on children who are excluded/suspended. <p>Complete – the following items have been included on the agenda for the meeting on 19 February 2024 for noting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family Hub Sustainability and Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme; 2. Children's Continuous Improvement Board Update; and 3. Action Tracker (this has been updated to include all outstanding actions).

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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